THE POPULARITY AND INFLUENCE OF SPOHR IN ENGLAND

Clive Brown

BODLEIAN LIBRARY OXFORD
DEPOSITED
THESIS
08-7-82



L'ANALYSE.

Souvenir of the Musical Union (Ninth Season), from a Lithograph.

Bazzini. H. Blagrove. Goffrié. J. Blumenthal. Vieuxtemps. Lazarus. S. Pratten. Jarrett. F. Hiller, Barret. Baumann. Lindpaintner. Dr. Spohr. Molique. H. Berlioz. Ella.

110]

(Drawn during Spohr's last visit to England in 1853)

(TT 1980)

The Popularity and Influence of Spohr in England

J.C.A. Brown Exeter College

D.Phil

Hilary term 1980

ABSTRACT

The popularity and influence of Louis Spohr have been misunderstood or ignored by musical historians of the present century. In a few cases there has been an uneasy recognition that he occupied a more prominent position in the eyes of contemporaries than the current neglect of his music might suggest, but no modern scholar has attempted a detailed examination of the attitudes which obtained towards him during his lifetime or an adequate investigation of the elements of his style and its influence on other composers. There are strong grounds for believing that the well documented admiration of many of the most important of his younger German contemporaries was not without its fruits in their music.

This thesis attempts to establish the extent and nature of his impact in England. In all previous studies of English music during these years (1820-1860) Spohr has not warranted more than a few generally dismissive sentences; from the evidence presented it will be clear that not only is this an inadequate account of his importance as a composer, but also a gross distortion of our understanding of the English musical scene at that time. Looking at English music from the central or near central position which Spohr occupied in the 1830's and 1840's reveals much about the development of taste and sheds light upon trends and opinions which are otherwise imperfectly understood. The fact that Spohr's music was believed by many to represent the stoutest bulwark of good taste and seriousness of purpose in contemporary music during that period is of prime importance. Much light is also thrown on musical journalism and the camps into which it was divided, though more questions are raised than can possibly be answered adequately in the space available.

Chapters 1 to 6 attempt a detailed reconstruction of shifting attitudes towards Spohr between 1820 and his death in 1859 and relate them to general trends in the English musical world. Chapter 7 traces the stages by which his reputation declined. Chapter 8 considers his style and its origins. And Chapter 9 examines his influence on English composers. Appendix A examines the career of Edward Taylor. Appendix B lists all performances of his music in England between 1820 and 1859 which it has been possible to trace. Appendix C lists English publications of Spohr's works reviewed in periodicals from 1820-1833. The periodicals section of the bibliography makes a tentative identification of musical critics together with the dates at which they were writing for particular journals.

Foreword

The scheme which has been adopted in this thesis is to keep footnotes to a minimum. Where it seemed necessary to present information in this form the footnote is indicated by an asterisk in the text. Bibliographical references, which merely indicate the source of information, are listed separately between pp. 364-377.

My first thanks are due to Dr. Hugh Macdonald for his invaluable support and guidance throughout my research; and also to Professor Dennis Arnold for his helpful advice during Dr. Macdonald's sabbatical term in 1979. Useful information on S.S. Wesley was given by Peter Horton, and courteous assistance was afforded by the staff of the Royal Academy of Music Library.

Finally I should like to thank Enid Brown for help with proof reading, Tim Brown for help in preparing the musical examples, and Cheryll Needham for typing this thesis.

Index

Chapter 1	1820	1
Chapter 2	1820 - 1830	26
Chapter 3	The Last Judgement & Azor & Zemira	47
Chapter 4	1830 - 1843	58
Chapter 5	1843 - 1848	112
Chapter 6	1848 - 1859	176
Chapter 7	After 1859	219
Chapter 8	Characteristics of Spohr's style	240
Chapter 9	Spohr's Influence on English Composers	292
Appendix A	Edward Taylor	321
Appendix B	Performances of Spohr's music in England 1820 - 1858	331
Appendix C	English publications of Spohr reviewed in periodicals 1825 - 1833	360
References		364
Bibliography (including abbreviations used for periodicals)		378

Chapter 1

1820

Before 1820 Spohr was virtually unknown in England. Only one of his works seems to have received a public performance here prior to that date, the overture Alruna having been given at the first meeting of the Professional Society in the Argyll Rooms on February 5 1816. It has proved impossible to find any reference to this performance apart from the programme, preserved in the Smart Papers[1], and the overture was clearly insufficient to awaken any real interest in Spohr as a composer. An examination of contemporary newspapers and journals has failed to reveal references to Spohr or his works before 1820 and it seems unlikely that any of his music was in general circulation. It is, however, probable that his reputation, as a violinist at least, was familiar to those of the musical public and profession who kept in touch with foreign events either through travelling abroad or through reading foreign journals. At any rate it can safely be assumed that 1820 may be taken as the starting point for any investigation of the course of Spohr's popularity and influence in England.

At the time of his first visit Spohr was thirty-six years old and had achieved a considerable reputation in Germany as a violinist, composer and conductor, while his visits to Italy, Switzerland, Holland and France

had made his name known in those countries. He had been a leading exponent of conducting in Germany as Concert-master at Gotha from 1805-1811, conductor of the first Frankenhausen musical festival in July 1811, director of the orchestra at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna from 1813 to 1815 and director of the opera at Frankfurt from 1818 to 1819. As a composer his reputation had been established by the First Clarinet Concerto of 1808 which Hermstedt had performed with great success all over Germany; by his own violin concertos; by his opera Faust (1813) successfully produced by Weber at Prague in 1816 and subsequently in other major opera houses; by the chamber works which he wrote for Tost in Vienna, of which the Nonet quickly became a popular favourite; and by his First Symphony which was regularly performed at the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts between 1811 and 1820.

About two months after Spohr received his invitation to go to London for the 1820 season, Weber was offered the post of Kapellmeister at Kassel. Preferring to remain at Dresden however, he declined the offer and in his letter of refusal recommended Spohr for the post, saying:

> We have the celebrated Spohr within our walls...such a brilliant and renowned artist whose honoured name cannot but awaken respect in all quarters would certainly be an ornament to the Elector's opera.[2]

In speaking thus of Spohr, whose own opinion of Weber's abilities was much less flattering[3], Weber was undoubtedly voicing the sentiment of the majority of German musicians.

But of all this the English musical world was almost entirely ignorant, and it is unlikely that Spohr would have been invited over by the Philharmonic Society at that time had it not been for the fact that Ferdinand Ries was then living in London and was one of the directors of the society. Ries had originally written to Spohr as early as December 1816 to put forward the suggestion of a visit to London the following season. The letter makes it clear that he had not heard Spohr play and that he had probably never met him but

was well aware of his reputation and was familiar with some of his compositions besides Alruna. He wrote:

> Obschon Ihre Werke mir schon der reichlichsten Genuss gewährten, so muss dieser ohne Ihren eigenen Vortrag nach dem Urteile mehrerer meiner Freunde doch nur ein halber sein[4].*

Spohr's reply is not extant but presumably as he was in Rome at the time Ries wrote to him, and about to travel south to Naples, any thought of going to London in the immediate future would have been dismissed.

Nevertheless, he must have shown some interest in the idea since Ries wrote to him again in October 1817 with more definite proposals, offering him in the name of the Philharmonic Society 100 guineas for playing at the society's concerts and another 50 guineas for one of his compositions. His hope that 'Sie uns auch Ihre schönen Sinfonien und Overtüren hier hören lassen werden'[5]** lends weight to the supposition that apart from Alruna they had not been performed in England up to that time. But once again Spohr was obliged to decline the offer since he had just accepted the post of director of the opera at Frankfurt.

The engagement at Frankfurt did not prove very congenial; within two years increasingly frequent disputes between Spohr and the senior director had led to his resignation in September 1819. In the same month he received another letter from Ries which offered much better terms than the last, apparently in response to Spohr's own stipulations. He was promised an honorarium of 250 guineas and the use of the Philharmonic Society's concert room for a benefit concert in May; the other conditions set out in the letter were:

> 1. Sie dirigieren oder spielen drei - oder viermal Solo oder im Orchester abwechselnd, in allen acht Konzerten. Letzteres ist ein Gesetzt für alle ohne Ausnahme im Orchester...
> 2. Können Sie in Keinem öffentlichen oder privaten Konzert auftreten, ehe Sie nicht in zwei unserer

* Although your works have already given me a great deal of pleasure, several of my friends have told me that without hearing your own performance of them one misses half the effect.

** 'You will also let us hear your beautiful symphonies and overtures here'.

> Philharmonischen Konzerte gespielt haben...
> 3. Bleibt ein Manuscript einer Ihrer Kompositionen, welches wir auswählen können, das Eigentum der Gesellschaft.[6]*

There was no longer any reason for Spohr to refuse and he had in any case regarded his stay in Frankfurt as 'an interruption to the gratification of my love for travel'.[7] It was therefore decided that he and his wife should spend the season of 1820 in London. On February 21 Spohr wrote to Speyer from Lille to tell him how the death of George III had upset all the concert plans and that the Philharmonic Concerts were now scheduled to begin on March 6. On February 23 he was to set out for Calais and would have arrived in London about a week before the first concert.

Before assessing the effects of Spohr's visit the facts must be established. Not only has no adequate account yet been given, but also the unreliability of some of the sources has led to misconceptions in the past which have never been satisfactorily resolved. The most important sources for this visit are press reports and advertisements, retrospective references by English writers, Spohr's Autobiography, and the letters which he wrote from London at that time to his friend Wilhelm Speyer. By far the most unreliable of these is the Autobiography. The account of his stay which he included in it was written down thirty-three years later and is full of factual inaccuracies. There is no reason to doubt that everything he mentioned in the narrative had a basis in some genuine memory however distorted, but on careful comparison of this account with other records it becomes clear that Spohr had confused the sequence of events. Indeed, in one important instance different occasions had become telescoped together in his mind and were related as though they had happened on the same evening, thus creating an imaginary concert out of portions of a Philharmonic trial night, a rehearsal and a concert.

* 1. That you direct, or play three or four solos, or play in the orchestra for all eight concerts. The last condition is a rule which applies to all without exception...
2. That you do not play in any public or private concert until you have played in two of our Philharmonic concerts...
3. That you leave the manuscript of one of your compositions, which we may select, as the property of the society.

Spohr's recollections were doubtless coloured by the fact that, though on first arriving in England he was scarcely known, on his next visit in 1839 he was received with enthusiasm and widely hailed as the most distinguished living composer. Consequently, in recalling the earlier visit without any direct knowledge of the course of events and opinions during the intervening nineteen years he tended to overestimate the force of his immediate impact and its role in bringing about some of the changes which he observed to have taken place.

The three letters to Speyer, written on March 27, April 17, and June 18 provide an invaluable means of corroborating or clarifying the Autobiography, but even with these there are problems since the text which is most generally cited, the version given in Wilhelm Speyer der Liedercomponist,[8] appears not to be complete and, as will be demonstrated, some of the missing passages are crucial to an understanding of the errors in the Autobiography. An alternative source for the letters which appears to have been unnoticed by earlier writers on these matters, is to be found in The Musical World for 1860[9]. This periodical published a number of articles on Spohr during the twelve months immediately following his death among which were the two letters to Speyer written from London on March 27 and April 17. In the normal course of events the German version from the biography of their recipient, which was directly compiled from correspondence by his son Edward Speyer, would seem to be preferable, but the Musical World translation is preceded by the following editorial note which lends authority to the text:

> We...are enabled to present our readers with some letters of Spohr...addressed to his friend Speyer. They have never been made public. Herr Speyer gave these interesting documents, unconditionally, to Herr A. Schindler, at the latter's reiterated request. We in our turn, are indebted to Herr Schindler for them.

A comparison of the two versions of the letter of April 17 reveals several places where the English translation contains material which does not appear in Edward Speyer's text. There is no reason to believe that this extra material was gratuitously invented by the translator, and the only reasonable

conclusion is that Edward Speyer was either using an incomplete copy made at the time the originals were passed on to Schindler, or that, for the sake of brevity, he simply omitted passages which seemed superfluous to him. Some abridgements of the text were noted by the insertion of dots, but the omission of the short passages which are important for the points under discussion was not indicated.

The significance of these differences will be considered later, but important as it is to establish the facts and to understand Spohr's own idea of the impression which he had made on English music, these sources give little idea of what the English thought about Spohr and his music. For this the only reliable information must be gleaned from press reports, and the very meagre amount of first-hand retrospective accounts which has survived, but even the latter are likely to be increasingly unreliable in proportion to the number of years which intervened before they were written down. Like Spohr's own reminiscences they would tend to have been coloured by hindsight and fallible memory. Some inferences, however, may be made from the Autobiography, even in cases where there is no supporting evidence, which throw light on English reactions towards Spohr. Such an instance is his first meeting with the Philharmonic Society directors[10]. This was presumably an unofficial meeting since it is not recorded in the minutes of the society. In view of the provable inaccuracy of many of Spohr's recollections of the visit it is clearly inadvisable to place much reliance on what he wrote about this event, especially since he admitted that much of the discussion was carried on in English and was therefore unintelligible to him. However, it seems that a central point of some difficulty was the question of whether Spohr should play his own music, as this was specifically excluded by the rule which permitted only the concertos of Mozart or Beethoven or such works as the directors might select. If Spohr's account is accurate it would seem to confirm the supposition that his reputation was very imperfectly known even among leading English musicians, for he went on to say that it

was only after Ries had continued the discussion for some time in English that they finally agreed. The lack of knowledge among the directors of Spohr's reputation as a composer also makes it apparent just how greatly Ries had been the prime mover in getting him over. If it seems strange that the directors should have endorsed the engagement, at so substantial a fee, of an artist about whom they knew very little, it may be noted that the invitation to Wagner to conduct in 1854 was issued under similar circumstances where it is clear that the majority of the directors knew almost nothing about him.

By collating the available sources it is possible to compile a list of the concerts at which Spohr played and at which his compositions were performed.* The identification of the works is not so straight-forward since the information given on concert programmes or in newspapers is generally very imprecise, being usually no more specific than 'Violin Concerto', 'String Quartet' or 'Symphony' giving no key or opus number. In a few cases where there is no mention of a work in letters or reviews it has been impossible to determine the particular piece performed. The attempt to establish the identity of works wherever enough evidence exists to do so is, however, important since it is only thus that some idea can be obtained of which works were newly introduced during the 1820's. One composition whose identity has not previously been recognised is the concerto which Spohr played at the Vocal Concert on April 14. The vagueness of the description of the work simply as Violin Concerto has led Arthur Jacobs to suggest that Spohr must have made a mistake in his letter of April 17 when he described it as in A major[11]. In fact his description is 'mein neues A-Dur Konzerte'[12], so the suggestion that he really meant A minor, which Jacobs made, does not help since none of the A minor concertos, op.1, op.4, and op.62, satisfy the description 'new' in any way. It cannot be the eighth concerto either, which

* This is given in Appendix B.

he had referred to in the previous sentence as 'meine Gesangsszena', nor could it be the unnumbered A major concerto which was published for the first time by Bärenreiter in 1955 as that had been composed in 1801. The solution to the dilemma is that Spohr had also written a double violin concerto in A major which was undoubtedly the work he played at the Vocal Concert. It was composed in 1808 but had just been published for the first time as op.48[13] so it would be reasonable to refer to it as new, meaning newly published. Schletterer's Verzeichnis der Werke von Ludwig Spohr lists it as being in A minor, but Spohr himself referred to it in the Autobiography (i.129) as A major, only a short passage at the beginning of the first movement being in A minor. If this conclusion seems rather speculative, the matter is proved beyond reasonable doubt by a report from the Norwich Festival of 1839, where Spohr performed the op.48 concerto with Blagrove, which mentions that Spohr had played the same concerto nineteen years previously with Mori[14].

Almost all the other factual problems connected with this visit are a result of the inaccuracy of the Autobiography, and it will be as well at this stage to identify and, where possible, resolve the inconsistencies. Some are of minor importance and are easily explained; others present more intractable difficulties, but even the minor discrepancies are important in so far as they help to explain the way in which Spohr's memory had become confused and thus open the way to a clearer assessment of his impact at that time.

The first discernable mistake is on page 77 where he wrote 'I therefore at the first Philharmonic concert came forward with my cantabile scena /Gesangsszene/ and in the second part with a solo quartet in E major'. This can be checked against the programmes of the concerts which show that no quartet was played on March 6, but that one was played on March 20. Further corroboration that this is the one referred to is provided by the letter of March 27 where he wrote 'Heute vor 8 Tagen spielte ich dann im Zweiten Konzert der Philharmonischen Gesellschaft mein "Quatuor Brillant," in Es-Dur'.*

* 'Eight days ago I played my "Quatuor Brillant" in E flat major in the second Philharmonic Concert'.

On the next page of the Autobiography Spohr recounted his delivery of letters of recommendation and mentioned that at Rochschild's the recipient, after hastily glancing at them, said 'I have just read (pointing to the Times) that you managed your business very efficiently'. Since Spohr placed the incident immediately after his first appearance at the Philharmonic (he actually said 'the next day') any reference to a review must be erroneous. The Times did not carry a review of any of his concerts until April 22 and The Morning Chronicle did not review the March 6 concert until March 13.

On pages 80 to 81 Spohr related how he and his wife, Dorette, went to Erard's to chose a new 'double mouvement' harp and how, because of the amount of practice she would require to get used to it, he intended that she should appear only once, at his benefit concert. On page 88 he again remarked that because of her physical weakness 'I adhered strictly to my previous resolution that she should appear once only at my own concert, and declined with firmness several offers that were made to her'. In fact they appeared together on three occasions; at the City Amateur Concert on April 13, at the Philharmonic Society on April 24, and at Spohr's benefit concert on June 8.

In referring to the first performance of his newly composed Second Symphony on April 10, Spohr again mentioned reviews, saying: 'The next morning all the London newspapers contained reports respecting the new symphony that had been composed in their town, and vied with each other in their praise of it'.[15] At this period it was quite exceptional for a newspaper to review a concert the next day. In this case the only newspaper which seems to have reviewed the concert at all was The Morning Chronicle and that was almost a month later on May 4.

One other small error is Spohr's statement on p. 91 that he played twice at Sir George Smart's Oratorio Concerts. His only appearance there was on March 22 when he played his Pot Pourri on 'La ci darem' in B flat. This is confirmed by the letter of March 27 and by advertisements in The Times and The Morning Chronicle. The mistake is probably explained by the fact that Sir

George Smart also conducted the City Amateur Concerts at which Spohr had played on April 13.

By far the most important passage in which Spohr's confused memory was at work is the one on pages 81 to 82 in which is concerned with his use of the baton and with the performance of his Concert Overture in F. This passage has misled a long succession of writers who accepted the veracity of Spohr's statement. Paul David in his article on Spohr for the first edition of Grove's Dictionary in 1883 stated on the authority of the Autobiography that Spohr had been the first to conduct publicly with a baton in England. Subsequent writers followed suit and Grove reprinted David's article in its first four editions without questioning this assertion. In The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz (1948) Adam Carse, in the light of Spohr's April 17 letter to Speyer, re-examined the accepted version and claimed that at the concert on April 10 Spohr had bowed to tradition and conducted from the piano. He then concluded that as the account of the baton conducting in the Autohiography appears to describe another occasion on which Ries was supposed to officiate at the piano, it must refer to May 8 and that it was on this evening that Spohr had conducted with the baton. He was, however, wrong on all counts[16].

In 1950 Arthur Jacobs entered the discussion with an article which went a long way towards clearing up the confusion surrounding these incidents[17], and the fifth edition of Grove followed this by deleting the reference to baton conducting in its reprint of Paul David's article. Jacobs has argued cogently that Spohr's claim as it stands in the Autobiography cannot be substantiated, and his objections to Carse's interpretation are entirely valid. He is certainly right to maintain that though Spohr used a baton at the rehearsal for the Philharmonic concert on April 10 he did not do so in the performance, nor at any concert of the 1820 season. His suggestion that he probably used his violin bow to give directions is reinforced by an editorial footnote in The Harmonicon for 1833, which was unknown to Jacobs, where it is stated that

'the practice of beating time with the bow was introduced into this country by M. Spohr[18]'. Since Spohr did not visit England again until 1839 this must refer to his first visit.

However, while broadly correct in his conclusions, there were several points of significance which Arthur Jacobs was unable to clarify. These are largely resolved by a comparison of the two available versions of the April 17 letter to Speyer, which were referred to above (pp. 5-6). One problem which he could not elucidate was the reference in the Autobiography to the performance, on the evening of the supposed baton conducting, of a work which at first sight it appears could not have been given at all during the 1820 season. Spohr described it thus:

> On this evening also, the concert overture which I had composed before I left Frankfurt was given for the first time. As it pleased very much the Philharmonic Society accepted it as the composition which according to my contract I was to leave in their hands.[19]

There is no difficulty in identifying the overture. It is the unpublished Overture in F which, as Spohr said, the Philharmonic Society accepted and which was first performed publicly by them on March 12, 1821. The autograph is now in the British Library as part of the Philharmonic Society collection (loan 4/922). The overture appears in Schletterer's Verzeichnis der Werke von Ludwig Spohr under the heading 'In Frankfurt, 1819' as 'Grosse Concertouverture für die philharmonische Gesellschaft in London. Ungedruckt'[20]. Indeed Spohr had not kept a copy of it and, as he went on to say in the Autobiography, he could not recall the beginning of it when compiling his thematic catalogue years later. Jacobs found Spohr's reference to a performance of this overture surprising since he could find no record of its having been played at any concert of the 1820 season, and if it had not been played then, Spohr could never have heard the work at all, except perhaps before his departure from Frankfurt. It is one thing to confuse the sequence of events but quite another to imagine a completely non-existent performance.

In fact, the overture was played by the Philharmonic during Spohr's visit,

at the trial night on April 3. This is made clear by the letter to Speyer in The Musical World's version. The text of the relevant portion of the letter in that version is given here with the passages missing from Edward Speyer's text in square brackets.

> Among other very sensible regulations, there is one to the effect that, during the series of concerts, the members shall execute, on two evenings, before a small and select audience of professionals and amateurs, only compositions (mostly symphonies and overtures) with which they are unacquainted, and decide, by the applause of those present, whether the pieces thus played are or are not worthy of being played publicly at one of the subsequent concerts. At an ordeal of this kind, I gave them my published symphony and two of my overtures [,that from Alruna, and the new one]. The enthusiastic applause with which these were distinguished (it is true they had to contend with only very weak productions a symphony by Soliva, the composer of the opera La Testa di Bronzo, and another, still weaker, by a native composer) impelled the directors to ask me to have the published symphony performed at the next concert. This, however, I declined, telling them I had intended for my debut as a composer a new symphony, written here in London. My proposition was accepted, although the directors seemed to think the new symphony would scarcely please so much as the old one did. But they changed their opinion, even on the first hearing of the piece at rehearsal. The band, whose good-will I had already gained, by small acts of attention and politeness, at the performance of my other things, exerted themselves to the utmost to execute the symphony in a way that would meet with my approval. They were accustomed more also, to my mode of conducting [(for I had been called upon to conduct at the trial of the new compositions a week previously),] and found this a great help, so that not only my symphony, but all the other pieces produced at this concert (the symphony in C with fugue, by Mozart, and the overtures to Fidelio and Medea) went with much more precision than usual.[21]

It will be noticed that the overtures played at the trial are identified in this version. The new one must certainly be the Overture in F, the most recently composed of his overtures. It is also clear that Spohr conducted at this trial, as the other addition to the text indicates, and that he used a baton to do so, since he later described his mode of conducting as being 'in my old and usual manner, from the score'. April 3, therefore, was the first time that Spohr used a baton in England.

Bearing all this in mind it becomes obvious that the confused account in the Autobiography is an amalgam of events from three separate occasions, the trial night, the rehearsal on April 10 and the concert of that evening.

For the first two he conducted from the score with a baton; on the third he took his place as leader but directed with his bow. The following is the account as it stands in the Autobiography.

> at the morning rehearsal on the day when I was to conduct the concert, Mr Ries took the place at the piano, and he readily assented to give up the score to me and to remain wholly excluded from all participation in the performance. I then took my stand with the score at a separate music desk in front of the orchestra, drew my directing baton from my coat pocket and gave the signal to begin. Quite alarmed at such a novel procedure, some of the directors would have protested against it; but when I besought them to grant me at least one trial, they became pacified. The symphonies and overtures that were to be rehearsed were well known to me, and in Germany I had already directed at their performance. I therefore could not only give the tempi in a very decisive manner, but indicate also to the wind instruments and horns all their entries, which ensured to them a confidence such as hitherto they had not known there. I also took the liberty, when the execution did not satisfy me, to stop, and in a very polite but earnest manner to remark upon the manner of execution, which remarks Mr Ries at my request interpreted to the orchestra. Incited thereby to more than usual attention, and conducted with certainty by the visible manner of giving the time, they played with a spirit and a correctness such as till then they had never been heard to play with. Surprised and inspired by this result the orchestra immediately after the first part of the symphony, expressed aloud its collective assent to the new mode of conducting, and thereby overruled all further opposition on the part of the directors. In the vocal pieces also, the conducting of which I assumed at the request of Mr Ries, particularly in the recitative, the leading with the baton, after I had explained the meaning of my movements, was completely successful, and the singers repeatedly expressed to me their satisfaction for the precision with which the orchestra now followed them.
>
> The result in the evening was still more brilliant than I could have hoped for. It is true, the audience were at first startled by the novelty, and were seen whispering together; but when the music began and the orchestra executed the well-known symphony with unusual power and precision, the general approbation was shewn immediately on the conclusion of the first part by a long-sustained clapping of hands.... On this evening also the concert overture which I had composed before leaving Frankfurt was given for the first time.[22]

Clearly the confusion of this account cannot be entirely resolved, but it is possible to distinguish tentatively between the events of April 3 and of April 10 in Spohr's narrative. The things which must belong to the latter are the conducting of the vocal pieces and the performance of a 'well-known symphony'; the pieces on April 3 being all new and apparently entirely

orchestral. To the former, on the other hand, belong the performance of the Overture in F, the astonishment of the Philharmonic directors and the 'audience' of professionals and amateurs at Spohr's use of the baton for the first time, and probably the arrangement with Ries that he would give up the score to Spohr. (On April 10 Attwood was at the piano.) The fact that Spohr's memory strongly associated the stir caused by his baton conducting with an evening other than that of the first performance of his newly composed second symphony (April 10) when, of course, he did not use a baton, is shown by his mentioning that concert later in the Autobiography narrative as though it were a separate event. The second symphony was not played at the trial night, as the letter to Speyer makes clear.

The confusion of the trial night with a concert is perfectly plausible at a distance in time of thirty three years, since the trial night was organised in very much the same way as a concert, being numerously attended, and the merits of the pieces performed decided by the applause of the 'audience'. It seems probable, too, that Spohr's method of directing with the violin bow on April 10 did not differ radically, so far as he himself was concerned, from his directing with the baton. Certainly he would have played in the tutti passages, but his remark in the letter than he knew the pieces so much by heart that he was 'enabled to help the orchestra even without the score'[23] suggests that he did a great deal more than simply give the tempo at the beginning of movements. The unfamiliarity and efficiency of his method was commented on by one reporter who wrote of his leading the orchestra in a 'novel and superior manner'[24]. In fact the practice of conducting with the violin bow survived long into the century and in some places the bow continued to be used in preference to the baton where the conductor no longer even held a violin in his other hand.

Spohr's use of his violin bow to conduct with may have seemed in the short term to be the most direct influence of this visit on English musicians, and it was not apparently a beneficial one. A letter to The Harmonicon on the

subject of leaders and conductors described the antics of some leaders in caustic terms:

> the custom...is for the leader to leave off playing at certain intervals, and then, assuming what I presume he thinks a very elegant attitude, and commanding position, flourishing his bow backwards and forwards most heroically...I presume this is done either to catch the attention of the ladies, or to impress on the minds of the unthinking part of the audience an idea of his importance and zeal.[25]

The editor specifically credited Spohr with having inspired such behaviour (in the footnote quoted above, p. 11) but also recognised that the custom as it had developed was a perversion of Spohr's initiative - that in the hands of a great musician like Spohr the practice was quite a different thing from the merely imitative actions of native violinists, which, as the letter took pains to point out, were simply exhibitionist, ineffectual and distracting.

On a more beneficial level Spohr's actions helped to draw attention to the problem of how an orchestra should best be directed in the increasingly complex music which was being written for it. The English were devoted to tradition. As Spohr wryly observed:

> they do not dare make an alteration, because what is once established is regarded as sacred and inviolable, for, after all, with all his political freedom, an Englishman is the most abject slave of etiquette.[26]

By his powerful personality and the successful results of his innovation Spohr perhaps played a part in shaking their conservatism and paving the way for improvements. Etiquette may have demanded that he lead as first violin on the night of the concert, but he had used the baton to great effect and the virtues of this method had been observed and approved by members of the orchestra. However, the time was not ripe for an Englishman to follow his example and it was to be many years before Sir Michael Costa became the first really efficient regular conductor in England. But Spohr's example prepared the ground for Weber and Mendelssohn to conduct in public and for the tentative efforts of Englishmen such as Sir Henry Bishop and Sir George Smart to direct with a baton (It is noteworthy that Sir George Smart was closely connected with

Spohr during this visit and that in his diary of a journey through Germany in 1825 he showed interest in Spohr's baton conducting at Kassel.)

It is possible to argue that on balance the bad effect of Spohr's example to leaders outweighed any benefit his display of the efficiency of the baton may have had, but his action had at least loosened the dead hand of tradition, and that was no mean achievement in a country where the authority of custom often seemed second only to that of God.

In the long run, however, it was as a violinist and composer that he was to make most impact on English music and it was primarily in these roles that he appeared before the general public in 1820. He could not have chosen a better time at which to make his debut in England. The climate of musical opinion was exactly right for him to make an impression in both these capacities. He was able to take advantage of the updraught of enthusiasm for instrumental display and the much more narrowly confined, though steadily increasing, interest in serious German music. As The Quarterly Musical Magazine wrote in 1819:

> The prominent feature of the times appears to us to be that the performance of instrumental music has made very rapid strides in the favour of the public. Vocal excellence is declining.[27]

The prestige of the Philharmonic Society was at its height; in 1820 it had 750 subscribers, its largest number ever, of whom 55 were titled. They came to hear a long concert of mainly instrumental music which made few concessions to popular taste, unlike the audience at the Oratorios of which it was complained:

> neither the ostensible reason for opening the theatres for the purpose of Oratorios during Lent, nor the manner of the performance of such things, is to be defended upon any other ground than the arbitrary taste of the public which 'will have it so,' and which has gradually been turning towards lighter entertainment in the way we have described.[28]

Despite this corruption of public taste which worried the musical journalists there is ample evidence that the most striking expansion and enterprise was to be found in realms of more serious music. The Philharmonic had to some extent created its own audience and the interest in instrumental music, particularly

of the German school, which it had helped to foster was by that date becoming so widespread that several new concert series had sprung up to satisfy it. Sir George Smart had conducted the Professional Concerts which began in 1816 and he also conducted the recently established City Amateur Concerts which took place in the London Tavern, and in 1820 another series of subscription concerts was instituted in the new Argyll Rooms. All of these concerts were principally instrumental in character and even the Vocal Concerts increasingly included a substantial amount of instrumental music. Spohr played in all of these at some time during his stay as well as in the Oratorios and several benefit concerts. On the other hand he refused to play at private musical parties for money since he strongly objected to the way in which these were conducted, with the artists being kept apart from the company and frequently having their performances virtually ignored. He seems to have played at only one of them, at the Duke of Clarence's, to whom he had an introduction, and he caused something of a stir by joining the company for dinner[29].

He was not alone in deploring the degrading way in which some of the finest musicians in London were treated at these affairs. A critic in The Quarterly Musical Magazine commented:

> Of what are called the Private Concerts of the Metropolis we cannot refrain from saying a few words. They partake of the magnitude rather than the grandeur to which everything is now brought, and by this circumstance their value as parties met for musical gratification is almost annihilated. In such places, music is scarcely heard and never felt.[30]

Even at this early stage in the growth of musical journalism in England the press played an important role in determining attitudes, and the weight of critical opinion tended largely to be exerted on the side of artistic seriousness and professionalism. In the field of composition Haydn and Mozart were accepted as the great modern masters; indeed, Mozart's influence was considered to have been 'able to change, if not to fix, the taste of a whole generation in the fine arts'.[31] Subsequent developments, however, were more cautiously received, and Beethoven, though obviously relished by many

of those who participated in or attended the Philharmonic Society, was viewed with suspicion by others. The tame applause for Mozart's Jupiter Symphony and the enthusiasm of the audience for Beethoven's Fifth Symphony at a concert in 1820 elicited the comment that it was 'only to be accounted for by this rage for extravagance'.[32] A similar observation was made in connection with a quartet by Mayseder, where it was predicted that:

> It is...probable that the taste for romancing will be pushed into yet stronger absurdity before the perverted judgement of the many will be brought back to truth.[33]

In this respect the editor of The Quarterly Musical Magazine was in agreement with the musical columnist of The London Magazine, one of the few general periodicals to contain articles on music at this date. This writer averred:

> We confess we are not so far gone in the extravagance of the present day, as to relish the unconnected vagaries which some admire in the works of Beethoven.

Reviewing the Seventh Symphony and a quartet, the critic continued:

> The first seemed to us crude, though forcible, - and tiresome, though fanciful...upon the merits of the quartet we agree entirely with the silent but sensible adjudication of a lady of rank, who slept profoundly from the beginning to the end of it.[34]

The failure to recognise greatness is almost a congenital deficiency among musical journalists, but this lack of vision does not diminish the importance of the press in fostering a more serious approach to music and in enhancing the prestige of the profession at this time.

With respect to the position of music in society it was generally agreed that it was rapidly rising in public estimation around 1820. The London Magazine remarked in its first issued that it was

> difficult...to decide whether music have not attained a rank and importance among our pursuits, that places it above the sister art of painting, and very nearly upon a level with poetry, in its immediate effects upon manners and happiness.

And it went on to say:

> Music is now, indeed, so universally cultivated, that scarcely a house can be found without a pianoforte or harp, and our streets are thronged by itinerant musicians, both vocal and instrumental, of no mean

acquirements.[35]

While it is clear that much of this activity was at an artistic level much below that of the Philharmonic, there is, nevertheless, enough evidence to infer that even at a relatively popular level there was a growing interest in and respect for German music. There were, for instance, the regular performances on the Apollonicon (a sort of orchestra-imitating organ), advertised in The Morning Chronicle, which were given in the afternoon by Mr. Purkis at 1/- and in the evening by Mr. Adams at 2/6. Along with more popular music their repertoire included such pieces as Haydn's Surprise Symphony and Mozart's Overture Le Nozze di Figaro.[36]

All these factors were likely to benefit Spohr to some extent. At the highest level, it was to his advantage that his compositions were seen as possessing solid musical worth; also because they were noticably indebted to Mozart rather than to more wayward schools, they were likely to appeal to even the most conservative connoisseur. At a broader level, his reputation as one of Europe's greatest violinists was established by his many performances in London's numerous instrumental concerts.

The Quarterly Musical Magazine referred to 'the galaxy of concerto players'[37] who were in London for the 1820 season, but there is no doubt that Spohr made much the greatest impact. The London Magazine commented;

> The principal novelty and attraction of the present season have been the performances of Mr. Spohr on the violin. This gentleman is considered to equal, if not to exceed, any player that has lately been heard in England.[38]

And The Quarterly Musical Magazine concurred in that view, stating:

> The playing of Mr. Spohr, a celebrated violinist, has been the grand circumstance of attraction during the season.[39]

Opinions of his playing among the press were remarkably in agreement. Reviewing his first appearance on March 6 The Morning Chronicle wrote:

> our expectations, though raised very high, were fully realized. He performed a Concerto "in the dramatic style," which consisted of a kind of recitative, a slow air, and a quick movement in the manner of scena. The

> composition, in itself, is full of melody and taste, and he imparted so much sentiment to it, that his violin, if it did not actually speak a language, "discoursed most eloquent music," and was more passionate than half the singers we hear. This strength of feeling in M. Spohr's playing, and his better judgement teaches him to place it in the foreground rather than to make execution the most conspicuous. Of the latter, however, he possesses an abundance.[40]

The Times expressed a similar judgement in its notice of the Argyll concert of April 18, commenting:

> Mr. Spohr's execution, admirable as it is, forms the least of his merits. Mechanical difficulties may be mastered by application, with a common capacity; but the true genius is discovered in style and expression; in these, and in his performance of an Adagio he has few competitors. His instrument in the slow movements can scarcely be said to want a voice and words to give it sentiment and passion, and his manner might be studied by our best singers with advantage to themselves and the public.[41]

The Quarterly Musical Magazine wrote of his visit in retrospect and voiced more reservations about his playing but in general was in agreement with the other critics' judgements, saying:

> A critic at Rome has said of this artist, that "he was the greatest singer upon the violin ever heard," (Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung), the highest compliment perhaps that can be paid to an instrumentalist... His manner is totally without pretension; his tone fine, his intonation admirable, and his execution of the most finished order. But as all exceedingly minute polish is apt to diminish force, the impression upon some was that he wanted fire; but much of this objection vanishes upon frequent hearing.[42]

The following year in a comparison of the three violinists Mori, Spohr and Kiesewetter, The Quarterly Musical Magazine returned to the same sort of description of Spohr's style of playing, saying that in contrast to Mori, whose temperament 'disposed him towards all that was energetic, there were traces in his great contemporary Spohr's execution of a mind continually turning towards refinement and deserting strength for polish'.[43] In his Musical Recollections, written some fifty years later, J.B. Cox referred to the preceding passage and added from his own experience of Spohr's playing:

> His delicacy was so exquisite that his force was diminished in comparison...

> It was doubtless for this reason that Spohr was by far the least popular of the three violinists at this time before the public: for although he was undoubtedly in the very first rank of his profession and talent, especially as the founder of a purely legitimate school, the interest he excited was lower in degree than that which, both before and since, has frequently attended the performance of players considerably below the standard he himself reached... Spohr did not condescend to astonish the "ears of the groundlings," and so lost the approbation which extreme cultivation and polish will never create, simply because they transcend the judgement of "the million."[44]

As a violinist, therefore, though he clearly made a considerable impact, it appears that the full extent of his talent was appreciated only by the connoisseur. The same is true of his compositions, and what is more, the musical world in general was probably far less interested in the composer than the executant. Despite the growing interest in the orchestral music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven at this time, there is no doubt that the interest of the public as a whole centred much more on the performer than on the music which he played. Also, the idea that a virtuoso violinist could be a fine composer did not accord well with English preconceptions about music. The reluctance of the Philharmonic directors to permit him to play his own compositions had demonstrated their scepticism. They were later constrained to admit that their misgivings had been unfounded, but an innate caution and conservatism was also shown by their attitude at the trial night on April 3 when, after having given them a hearing of his First Symphony, Spohr intimated that he would like to make his debut as a composer with the newly completed Second Symphony.

In general Spohr appears to have appealed most strongly as a composer to the musicians themselves and to a relatively limited circle of connoisseurs. His music was like his violin playing in that it was not, as later reviews show, calculated to make its most marked impact on the general public. In a sense his works were never, in 1820, presented to a wider audience than that of the Philharmonic, for the compositions which he performed at other concerts, with the exception of his own benefit concert, were all works for the violin

and in that respect were inseparable from his own performance of them. Despite The Morning Chronicle's observation on 'the superiority of his music over that of most violin players'[45] it was not upon this that his claims to be considered as a serious composer could be founded. Spohr himself made the reference to his 'debut as a composer' being made with the Second Symphony, and it was certainly upon his symphonies and overtures that his qualities as a composer would be judged.

In retrospect Spohr seems to have imagined that his works made more impact than they actually did. The fact that the papers did not 'vie with each other' in their praise of the Second Symphony, as he claimed, has already been remarked on. (p.9 above). What actually was thought about it is not so easy to determine. The Quarterly Musical Magazine said of the April 10 performance simply that:

> A symphony of Mr. Spohr was well received, but did not excite extraordinary sensation.[46]

The Morning Chronicle, on the other hand, was more impressed saying:

> The third concert was, on the whole, a brilliant performance, and owed much of its eclat to a new symphony by M. Spohr, performed for the first time, which places him amongst instrumental composers of the highest class, being as remarkable for the elegance and vocality of its melody, and the consistency of its design, as for the scientific knowledge which it exhibits throughout. The audience received it with an applause that must have gratified the author, and which will, we hope, incite him to similar efforts.[47]

The Morning Chronicle's account certainly agrees more closely with what Spohr wrote in his letter of April 17, where he said rather modestly:

> My symphony was...executed with more precision and nicety than I could expect after one rehearsal, and that rather a hurried one, and it is to this, no doubt, that I am indebted for the fact that it was received by the public with greater enthusiasm than any other orchestral composition during my stay here. The minuet or scherzo was encored, and applauded after its repetition even more than before.[48]

Evidence that the coolness of the critic of The Quarterly Musical Magazine may have resulted from his own lack of appreciation of Spohr's music, and that this may have caused him to play down the audience's enthusiasm, is afforded

by his verdict on the quartet played at the Philharmonic on March 20 which he characterised dismissively as 'so entirely calculated to display the single performer as to injure its effect as a concerted piece'.[49] The Morning Chronicle, in contrast referred to it as 'a charmingly expressive and scientific Quartet', and added that it 'was rewarded by reiterated plaudits'.[50]

On the whole reviewers were noticably less interested in Spohr as a composer than as a violinist. The only review of him which appeared in The Times, for instance, did not make any remarks about the music he played, nor did The London Magazine, while The Quarterly Musical Magazine, apart from the comments on the symphony and quartet quoted above, mentioned only the pot pourri on a theme of Mozart played on April 27, about which it made no comment, and the Gesangsszene concerto, about which it merely remarked that 'the composition was very clever and classed under its proper head'.[51]

The critic of The Morning Chronicle seems to have been by far the most enthusiastic of Spohr's admirers in the press. His review of Spohr's benefit concert was extremely appreciative. Having referred to him as 'the justly celebrated violin player', the reviewer continued:

> many of his own compositions were performed with great effect, particularly the grand symphony, written for the Philharmonic society, a Nonetto, and a Duet for harp and violin by Mad. Spohr and himself. The band was most liberally chosen, and the Princess Augusta, the Duke of Clarence together with many distinguished connoisseurs, honoured the performance by their presence. M. Spohr has added considerably to his fame by this visit to London, where he has found more real judges of musical merit than foreigners unacquainted with this country are inclined to believe. He is an artist who unites, in one person, the qualities of composer and performer, in a degree of perfection that is seldom equalled, and we trust that at some future period we may congratulate the musical public upon the return of M. Spohr to a metropolis where the more he is known the higher his talents will be appreciated.[52]

From the above evidence, limited though it may be, it is possible to obtain a fairly clear idea of the impact which Spohr made in various respects during this visit. The role in which he came most before the public was that of violinist. Socially the audience for his performances ranged from the members

of the peerage and 'haut ton' who would have heard him at the Duke of Clarence's soiree to the members of the middle class who could have afforded the cheapest price of admission to the Oratorios: from the fashionable world of the benefit concert to the largely commercial clientele of the City Amateur Concerts. In one sense, too, all these were familiar with Spohr as a composer, since he played only his own compositions, but, as has been remarked, reviews indicate that the music was generally looked on as secondary to its execution.

Performances of those works which could entitle him to independent consideration as a composer were heard by a much more limited audience. His compositions induced less widespread notice than the account in Spohr's Autobiography implies. Nevertheless, they undoubtedly raised a significant amount of interest and enthusiasm, though as with his playing the impression is given that only the cultivated musicians and amateurs were able to appreciate their beauties to the full. Later accounts confirm that Spohr's works created the feeling that they contained more than could be assimilated at a first hearing.

The possible effects of his innovations in leading and conducting have been discussed at length, but one other practical matter in which he appears to have had some influence was his method of setting up the violin. The Quarterly Musical Magazine mentioned:

> a peculiarity in the fitting up of his violin, the tailpiece being considerably shorter than those in general use. This construction is said to give a quicker return of the string from the finger-board, and to confer greater facility in execution.[53]

In his March 27 letter to Speyer (in a passage missing from the text in Wilhelm Speyer der Liedercomponist) Spohr wrote:

> My change on the violin has turned out excellent; the violinists here are already beginning to imitate it.[54]

Whatever reservations may have been entertained in some quarters about his playing and his compositions, one is left in no doubt that his visit

was 'the principal novelty and attraction' of the London season in 1820, but as was usually the case, the next season would provide something to efface all but the dimmest memory of Spohr in most people's minds. Only among a relatively small group of musicians and connoisseurs was the interest which his compositions had aroused sufficiently strong to be retained after his departure. The next chapter will show how this spark of enthusiasm was kept alight among the members of the Philharmonic Society and how it gradually kindled interest elsewhere. At the very least London was now aware of Spohr's existence.

Chapter 2

1820 - 1830

During the 1821 season the new focus of attention for the fashionable concert-goer was the Bavarian violinist Kiesewetter. His performances inevitably provoked comparisons with Spohr's, and J.B. Cox's remarks (see above p. 20) suggest that these were not generally in Spohr's favour, though the article in The Quarterly Musical Magazine which compared his playing with that of Kiesewetter and Mori gave a judicious appreciation of the qualities of each of them.

There is very little direct evidence to indicate how much continuing interest there was in Spohr as a composer, but the scarcity of material, in itself, implies that it was not considerable. There seem to be no references to him in the press at this time, with the exception of the above-mentioned article and a few retrospective writings which can confidently be identified as referring specifically to the years immediately succeeding his visit. An article in The Atlas in 1843 recalled that at the time of his first visit Spohr was:

> coldly received by audiences, and professors, who neither felt the exquisite beauty of his music, nor understood the matchless purity of his performance, and he left us not in disgust, for that were too harsh a feeling for his kindly nature, but in vexation and disappointment.[1]

It is likely that this description of the coolness of his reception encompasses the memory of an attitude which prevailed in the aftermath of that visit.

Spohr's music was not of a nature to attract instant enthusiasm from the general public, as he himself recognised. Public acceptance came slowly with the increasing growth of a taste for German music and in the wake of appreciation among professional musicians. In these circumstances it was natural that what interest there was during the first half of the 1820's should be largely confined to the Philharmonic Society. There are grounds for believing that some at least of the prominent members of the society had been more deeply impressed by his compositions than the general public; a proportion of those musicians who had been personally involved with Spohr could not have failed to be impressed by an artist of such profound musicianship and powerful personality. It may be inferred from the available evidence that three of the seven directors for the 1821 season were already well disposed towards his music. Ries, as his letters demonstrate, had formed a friendship with Spohr during 1820 and published his Fourth Symphony shortly afterwards with the inscription 'dedicated to Lewis Spohr by his friend Ferdinand Ries'.[2] He was likely therefore to support Spohr's interests. Of the others Sir George Smart and Henry Bishop can positively be identified as being among his admirers at a later date. Sir George Smart had been closely connected with Spohr during his stay, visited him at Kassel in 1825 and was later prominent in directing performances of his works. Bishop shows evidence in his own works of the sincerest form of flattery (see below p. 293ff) and was credited with being responsible for the introduction of extracts from Spohr's operas by an article in The Spectator in 1843 which stated:

> Be it recorded to the honour of Bishop...that he was the person to introduce to his countrymen the dramatic compositions of his illustrious German contemporary: it was at Bishop's suggestion that various portions of Spohr's operas were first translated and performed at the Philharmonic Concerts.[3]

Outwardly however there was little evidence of genuine enthusiasm.

The only work of which there is any record of a performance in London in 1821 is the Concert Overture in F, publicly performed for the first time at the Philharmonic Concert on March 12 1821. There appear not to have been any reviews of that concert and presumably the work did not make any great impression since it was only ever performed again once, at a Philharmonic Concert in 1874. (Of course lack of performance does not necessarily prove want of merit; Mendlessohn's 'Italian Symphony' too was laid on the shelf for years after its first performance). The overture, since it was never published and had no title by which it might be remembered, failed to stick in the public memory and was quietly forgotten. It is in fact a charming and attractive work, but its first performance came too early, before Spohr's reputation was established, for it to gain admission to the repertoire and its second performance came too late, when Spohr's reputation was already in decline.

1822 also saw a single performance of Spohr at the Philharmonic; this time the First Symphony, a more substantial work, which was soon to become a regular feature on the concert programme. As Spohr's own account shows it had greatly pleased the directors on its performance at the trial night in 1820 (see above p.12) and it was to become the most frequently performed of all his symphonies in England despite the fact that several of the others, particularly the Second and Fourth, were rated more highly by connoisseurs. This may possibly be accounted for by its being less demanding technically and more straightforwardly classical in structure and harmony, all of which features would have made it more accessible to performers and audience; it was often referred to as showing the influence of Mozart, whose music, as has been shown,* was widely appreciated at the time. Nevertheless, reviews later in the 1820's constantly stressed its 'scientific' qualities and the difficulty of understanding it at first hearing.

* See above p.17; see also N. Temperley, 'Mozart's influence on English music', Music and Letters xliii(1961), 307-318.

As yet however the press showed no interest in Spohr's compositions and did not comment on either of these performances. In this connection it should be noted that the only specifically musical periodical in 1822 was The Quarterly Musical Magazine, which seldom reviewed individual concerts, and that the daily papers reviewed concerts very infrequently. There seem to have been no reviews of Philharmonic concerts in The Morning Chronicle, which had covered them so fully in 1820, between 1820 and 1830; nor did The Times or The Morning Herald cover them.

By 1823 there began to be more tangible indications of increasing interest in Spohr. The Quarterly Musical Magazine was joined in that year by The Harmonicon, which was published monthly and gave a fuller coverage of musical events in London. The Harmonicon's detailed reports of individual Philharmonic concerts provided a public expression of opinion on the merits of Spohr's works. Three of his compositions were included in the Philharmonic Society's programmes for the ensuing season. One of his violin concertos was performed on April 21 by Grund about whom The Quarterly Musical Magazine noted: 'He is a pupil of the celebrated Spohr[4].' The Harmonicon made a similar observation, describing Spohr as 'the distinguished violin-player engaged at these concerts three years since'. These comments indicate that there was still a tendency to think of Spohr primarily as a violinist or at least that it was felt that this was the most natural way to identify him to the journal's readers. On the other hand The Harmonicon was impressed by the overture to Alruna, performed again on May 19 1823, saying:

> Spohr's overture to Alruna is one of the best productions of this excellent composer: if he proceed as he has begun, - and he has plenty of time before him, according to the usual chances - he will become one of the greatest musical ornaments of Germany.[6]

The overture, composed in 1808 was, by Spohr's own admission an imitation of Mozart's overture to The Magic Flute[7] and is, despite a few typically Spohrish features, written very much in Mozart's style. Bearing that in mind the critic's reaction tends to confirm the supposition that many English

musicians had a strong conservative bias and helps to explain why the initial reaction to many of Spohr's later and more individual works which were introduced over the next few years was often distinctly cool.

The other piece performed at the Philharmonic concerts that season was an unidentified string quartet, one of those which Spohr himself had played in 1820. The review in The Harmonicon, while appreciative of the composition, once again lends emphasis to the fact that as a violinist the 'matchless purity' of his performances had apparently elicited only qualified approbation. It commented;

> Mori played the masterly quartett by Spohr in an exquisite manner, we have heard the composer himself perform it, and, of the two, rather prefer our own countryman in it.[8]

Besides these performances and reviews there were other indications that by 1823 interest in Spohr was beginning to spread. The Quarterly Musical Magazine carried reports of his recent activities in its surveys of 'The State of Music on the Continent'. One of these referred to his opera Faust as being 'represented as one of the greatest works of modern times,' but the editor added a footnote stating: 'this report, we have reason to believe must be received with caution'.[9] The press was not yet ready to allow Spohr such a high position as the report had implied. Even so, it seems to have been accepted by this date that he was a figure in whom readers could expect to be interested and that his status in the world of German music was beginning to be recognised. The same magazine also mentioned other recently composed works in these surveys of foreign music, including the Quintet for piano and wind op.52, a clarinet concerto (probably the second) and his opera Jessonda. About the opera it remarked:

> The performance was very successful, and the Musicalische /sic/ Zeitung..offers,,thanks to Spohr for the great treat afforded them.[10]

In connection with this opera The Harmonicon printed a translation of Spohr's own article, 'An Address to the German Composers'.[11]* This was principally

* Originally 'Aufruf an deutsche Componisten in Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung, XXV(1823), 458.

an appeal for a new approach to German opera which he felt he had achieved with Jessonda. It is noteworthy that the editor still felt it necessary to identify Spohr for the benefit of his readers at the head of the article as 'The celebrated Performer and Composer', and that the performer was still given precedence of the composer.

The Harmonicon also provides the first clear evidence that foreign editions of his works were becoming available. Among 'Boosey's recent importations' it mentioned editions of 'Spohr's three quatuors op.58' and the overture to Faust in a version for piano duet.[12] The earliest English edition which it has been possible to locate may date from as early as 1821; this is the overture Alruna arranged for septet by H.J. Banister. A copy in the British Library is listed in the catalogue as being a reissue of c. 1825 of an edition first published c.1821 and bears the inscription on the title page 'Performed at the Philharmonic Concerts:' a copy of the same arrangement in the Parry Library at the Royal College of Music has no reference to the Philharmonic Concerts on the title page. Since the overture was first performed at the Philharmonic in 1823 the Royal College copy must presumably have been issued before that date.

There are a considerable number of arrangements of orchestral works for the same or similar combinations of instruments which appeared around the mid 1820's. The British Library also possesses Banister's arrangement of Spohr's overture op.12 for septet, while the Royal College of Music has the First Symphony and the overture to Jessonda in versions by other arrangers. The symphony bears the title 'Spohr's Première Symphonie arranged for two violins, two violas, two violoncellos, flute and contrabasso, inscribed to Signor Dragonetti by George Piggot'. The overture is headed 'Spohr's Celebrated Overture Jessonda, arranged as a septet...by Arth. Betts. Dedicated to the Gentlemen Subscribers to his Practical Septet Parties'. A similar version of an overture by Rossini was 'Dedicated to the Subscribers of The Amateur Symphony Party by N. Mori'. These dedications demonstrate that

there was more than one group of amateurs who met regularly to play and listen to orchestral works in these domestic versions. That there was a substantial number of amateurs who were capable of tackling this sort of technically demanding music is suggested by a reference in The Athenaeum in 1830 to the 'vast number' of good musical amateurs 'whose acquirements average above those of the professors (even the imported ones)'.[13]* The appearance of Dragonetti's name probably indicates the participation of professional musicians in such soirées and provides a link between them and the Philharmonic Society. The existence of these editions shows that there was an undoubted interest in Spohr among serious amateurs and one may infer that his works were more admired than the limited number of public performances suggests.

There is no doubt that the circle of his admirers was expanding. In particular it is probable that his music was making its strongest impression on professional musicians, especially those connected with the Philharmonic Society. The opinion that his style was more calculated to appeal to the sophisticated listener than to make its mark on popular taste began to be voiced by the critics with increasing frequency and emphasis. The Quarterly Musical Magazine said of the Second Symphony when it was performed at the Philharmonic concert on April 5 1824:

> The delicacy, study and elaboration, which are so remarkable in the performance of Spohr, are transferred to his compositions, which, however delightful to amateurs in general, will please the scientific in a far more eminent degree.[14]

A review in The Harmonicon of the same performance is so similar in content that it leaves little doubt they were expressing a predominant view. It stated:

> Amongst the living composers of orchestral music, Spohr stands very high; his science, his knowledge of the powers of various instruments, his elegant taste and indefatigable industry in revising his compositions, and in giving the highest finish to them, altogether imparts a charm to his productions, which if it be not felt and admitted by the multitude, is enjoyed and acknowledged by the connoisseurs; and the grand test of

* This comment was almost certainly made by John Ella who was already prominent in organising music parties among the upper-classes.

> his merit is, that the more he is heard, the more he is admired. His works certainly are much elaborated, and it requires no slight knowledge of the art to be enabled to appreciate them. This is particularly the case with the symphony performed at the fourth concert, which does not unfold all its beauties to the uninstructed hearer, but to skilful judges, - or at least the majority of them, - it affords high intellectual pleasure.[15]

Other reviews of concerts during the 1824 season maintained similar judgements. Of the overture to Faust, which was given its first English performance in the Philharmonic concert of May 10, The Harmonicon said that it was:

> a fine composition, full of thought and ingenuity, but like most of his compositions, requires to be often heard to be understood.[16]

The First Symphony, performed once again at the concert on June 7, was likewise described as 'a very fine, scientific composition /which/ ought to be annually given', but the objection was made that 'it should be the only thing of so grave and learned a kind that is produced on the same evening'. The reviewer considered that the string quartet by Spohr, included in the same concert, was 'most unadvisedly introduced, being much in the same style, very long, and to most people rather heavy'.[17]

The burgeoning interest in Spohr which is increasingly apparent by 1824 caused The Harmonicon to publish a 'Memoir of Ludwig Spohr' in its December issue along with an engraving of him which, since it was published by W. Pinnock in January 1824, must have been separately available for some time. The memoir was appreciative but not over-lavish in its praise of Spohr's compositions, saying that:

> A certain gloom is spread more or less over all his compositions, as far as regards melody; and the interest they excite, mainly consists in the profound learning, the richness of the harmonies, and in the skilful modulations which they display. Nevertheless, he is one of the principal living composers of Germany, and his works for his own particular instrument are not rivalled by any contemporary.[18]

It later added that the two symphonies and the overture produced at the Philharmonic concerts in 1820 'give him an undoubted right to be classed amongst

the great orchestral composers of the age'. However, the tendency to think of him primarily as a violinist still persisted to some extent, as is shown by the following remarks:

> As a performer on the violin, he has, if possible, a still greater reputation than as a composer, and stands unequalled for beauty and fulness of tone, for purity of expression, and for what may be called classical taste.[18]

But this is less surprising in view of the pre-eminent position he was allowed in that sphere, for comparing him with Kiesewetter, Paganini and Mayseder it was averred that despite their surpassing him in particular qualities, 'none as a performer combines so many great qualities as Spohr'.[18]

The years 1820 to 1824 therefore represent a distinctive initial phase in the growth of Spohr's reputation in England. By the end of 1824 his music had become too firmly established in the admiration of many discerning musicians to sink back into oblivion. Awareness of the high position he held in Germany, which was reinforced by the reports of the musical periodicals, could not fail to have an effect on English opinion. A report from Leipzig of the first performance of Jessonda in that city, which was included in The Harmonicon, observed:

> The Jessonda of Spohr has been produced here and received with great applause. It gives us great pleasure to see the works of this excellent and spirited composer duly appreciated by the public. We honour M. Spohr as an artist who is well versed in the management of instruments, and who in this respect deserves to rank among the first composers of the day. He possesses the happy art of developing his ideas fully and intelligibly, and from the midst of an occasional artful and apparent complication of ideas, of bringing out the subject clear and striking. In harmony he is very rich, and abounds in graceful melody, which cannot fail to render his works popular.[19]

The last statement is somewhat at odds with the frequently expressed view of critics that Spohr's music was more likely to please the connoisseur than the general public; indeed Spohr himself conceded that his music was 'not adapted to please the multitude and excite the popular enthusiasm'.[20] But despite this, extracts and arrangements from his works began to appear in England at this time.

In 1824 The Harmonicon included the aria 'O quanto Vaga' from Zemire und Azor, with English words, in its musical supplement and the following year a 'Chorus and Dance in the opera of Jessonda' arranged for piano. During 1825 and 1826 twelve English publications of arrangements from Faust and Jessonda were advertised in The Quarterly Musical Magazine and The Harmonicon, many of which were obviously designed for wide circulation.* Spohr was not alone in receiving such attention from the arrangers, for these years witnessed an enormous spate of piano arrangements from operas by Rossini, Meyerbeer, Weber, Winter and many others. These editions appeared so rapidly that a reviewer in The Repository of Arts was moved to contrast the decreasing numbers of genuine new piano pieces issuing from the presses with the vast increase in arrangements of operas, complaining that: 'a glut of them is now to be met with in every publisher's window'.[21]

The critics however, were generally not convinced that Spohr's music was of a nature to attract public favour. Of the 'Brilliant Overture to the opera of Jessonda' arranged for piano and published by Ewer and Johanning, The Harmonicon commented:

> The overture to Jessonda claims to be considered as an elaborate scientific production. Viewed in this light it is unquestionably a clever composition; but as to effect - at least on the pianoforte - it will dissappoint most who undertake it, for it is weighed down by a multitude of notes, having little extricable melody to give it buoyancy.[22]

A similar verdict was given by The Repository of Arts on a volume of 'Select Airs' from Jessonda published in an arrangement for piano by Boosey. The critic commented, beginning with a few words of praise, that the arrangement was:

> certainly to be ranked with the best adaptions of this description; and the music itself is of the sound kind. But the style of Spohr with all its depth and solidity, is not remarkable for melodiousness. There does not breathe the fascinating ease and the graceful sweetness of the good Italian models; nor is it so attractive and clear as the strains of Mozart, Winter, Weigl and others of the German school.[23]

* See Appendix C.

On the other hand, a 'Pot Pourri of Favourite Airs' from Jessonda published by Ewer was tersely recommended with the comment 'nineteen pages for three shillings - and ought to meet with public encouragement'.[24]

Many of the same comments were made about Faust. The Harmonicon gave a cool reception to 'Select Airs' from Faust, published by Paine and Hopkins of which it was remarked that 'considering the laboured manner in which M. Spohr writes, /they/ are as familiarly arranged as their construction would allow.'[25] The Repository of Arts, whose reviews of Spohr though broadly agreeing with most of The Harmonicon's criticisms seem to have been more sympathetic to his style, made some interesting points in its notice of 'The Admired Airs in Spohr's Celebrated Opera Faust'; commenting:

> The specimens of Spohr's Dr Faustus, selected and carefully adapted by Mr Griesbach, fully confirm our opinion of this author's style. There is everywhere abundance of thought and musical science, and no lack of strong modulation; all is very good music: but we are not ashamed to confess it, the pleasing tunes of even Kauer and Dittersdorf, countrymen of Mr. S. much inferior to him in the scale of compositorial gradation, possess more attractions for us, according to our present relish. What changes time may effect in our taste we will not answer for. At any rate Mr Griesbach has done ample justice to his author, and his book will serve to bring the amateur acquainted with a style somewhat new and unusual.[26] The polacca appears to us particularly interesting.

In view of Spohr's later popularity this critic showed a notably open-minded perspicacity. Undoubtedly his music did not yet accord with the public taste, but the enthusiasm of musicians is clearly evident behind this spate of publications. His style was, as the critic perceived, not readily comprehensible in terms of what was currently fashionable, yet he also saw that its potential appeal was not for that reason to be discounted.

Up to 1825 references to Spohr had been generally respectful, stressing the seriousness and technical accomplishment of his works. Until then it had only been heard in small quantitites by a specialist audience, but now that it had assumed pretensions to popular favour, different critical criteria seem to have been applied. Also, there had perhaps been too much too quickly:

a surfeit of Spohr is more easily experienced than with many other composers. The review of the Philharmonic concert of June 7 1824 (p. 33 above) had implied that even the relatively serious audience which frequented those concerts could only stomach his music in limited doses; the fact that the Philharmonic's programme for 1825 did not include a single one of his works (the only year between 1820 and 1874 not to do so) tends to confirm that the directors may have feared that their subscribers were becoming satiated with it.

However, though neglected by the Philharmonic Society that season, 1825 was the first year in which any of his compositions seem to have been performed elsewhere since 1820. The overture to Faust was played at the Yorkshire Amateur Music Meeting in Leeds on June 22, and a 'Symphony Concertante' for two violins was included in the Royal Academy of Music concert at Hanover Square on June 30,* played by two Academy pupils, Seymour and Blagrove (the latter of whom was to become a pupil of Spohr).

It is instructive to note that within two years of its foundation, pupils at the Academy were being introduced to Spohr's music and this helps to explain the origin of a familiarity with his style which is indicated in the early attempts at composition of some of the Academy's first students. It is tempting to surmise that a reference in a letter from Sir A. Barnard to Lord Berghersh in 1828 concerning the entries for a prize competition for an operatic finale may already imply Spohr's influence. He wrote:

> They have, however, all more or less a disposition to deviate from the subject to introduce extraneous and difficult modulations in the modern German style.[27]

The reference to difficult modulations suggests Spohr rather than Weber or Beethoven, while the availability of numerous versions of Faust and Jessonda at that time and the undoubted interest among serious musicians testifies to a knowledge of Spohr's operatic style. But in view of the conservatism of English musical taste, particularly among noble dilettanti, Barnard may even

* This work must have been the Concertante op.48 which Spohr had played with Mori on April 14, 1820, since the only other similar work by Spohr, the Concertante op.88 had not yet been composed.

have had Mozart in mind when referring to modern German modulations. The same criticisms of 'laboured' and 'scientific' that were being levelled at Spohr had certainly been directed at Mozart twenty years earlier.*

For the rest of the decade, after the setback in 1825, performances of Spohr continued to increase slowly at the Philharmonic and elsewhere. Incomplete information, except for the Philharmonic Society, makes it likely that a number of performances have gone unrecorded, but references to performances of his works survive in isolated programmes and in reviews which show that items were performed at the Yorkshire Amateur Music Meeting at York in 1826, the Royal Academy of Music in 1827, a Concert of a Committee of Professors in London and a benefit concert at York in 1829, and at the Societa Armonica, the City of London Amateur Concerts and the City Amateur Concerts (these were separate societies) in 1830. During these years new compositions were gradually introduced. Instrumental works first given in England between 1826 and 1830 were the overtures to Jessonda, Der Berggeist, Pietro von Abano, the Concert Overture op.12, the Double Quartet in D minor, op.69 and, at a Philharmonic trial night in 1830, the Third Symphony. Vocal works included 'Si lo sento' from Faust, the concert aria 'Tu m'abbandonai ingrato' and other numbers from Faust, Jessonda, Der Berggeist and Zemire und Azor.

Despite this practical evidence of growing interest however, many press reports of about 1826 began to adopt a cool or carping tone, particularly those in The Harmonicon which were probably the work of the editor, Ayreton. But opinions were not static and a comparison of successive reviews appearing in The Harmonicon over the next few years shows a gradual shift of attitude. Of course, this critic's view was not necessarily reflective of anyone's opinion but his own, but it would be wrong to underestimate the influence of the press on public opinion even at this early stage of musical journalism. Before the appearance of Edward Holmes's reviews in The Atlas in 1828, The

* See The Times review of La Clemenza di Tito, 5:III:1812.

Harmonicon had the field largely to itself since The Quarterly Musical Magazine's reviews of individual Philharmonic concerts were very infrequent.

The first performance of the overture to Faust in 1824 had been reasonably well received by the reviewer, with the proviso that it could not be fully taken in at a first hearing.[28] Subsequent notices however were more decidedly unfavourable. At the Yorkshire Amateur Music Meeting in 1825, it had been found to be 'not particularly effective or pleasing'.[29] The following year a review of J.F. Burrowes's arrangement of the overture for piano duet called forth a damning judgement in which the critic observed:

> With all our admiration, which is not a little, of Spohr, both as author and performer, we are compelled to say of this overture, that it is a most tiresome, dreary, uninteresting mass of crudity and chromaticism, destitute of melody, and with not one feature of originality.[30]

It is interesting to note that his view of the overture was not entirely shared by the writer in The Repository of Arts, whose review, though critical, was more thoughtfully expressed and gave a more generous appraisal. He commented:

> With every advantage of compositorial learning and orchestral experience, it is dry and heavy, as a whole, like many of the productions of those modern German composers, who, in following the style of Beethoven, do not compensate for his wildness, eccentricity, and occasional hardness, by those charming fragments of melodic inspiration, which vivify the works of their prototype. But clever as this overture must certainly be pronounced, and not destitute of occasional points of interest, its adaptation as a duet for the piano-forte was worth undertaking...To players of inferior ability we would not willingly entrust the performance.[31]

Two years later a review of the Philharmonic performance of May 26 1828 in The Harmonicon showed a slight softening of attitude and implied that the critic's low opinion of the overture was by no means generally shared. He wrote:

> The overture to Faust is obscure; it has not yet unfolded itself to our understanding: we hear very good judges assert that it is full of meaning - that the genius of the composer is there manifest in all its power. We therefore still continue to suspend our judgement under the hope that we may yet become enlightened.[32]

Once again, in 1831, he returned to the same subject on the occasion of another Philharmonic performance, saying:

> Of the overture to Faust we lost a part, owing to its having been placed at the beginning of the act, therefore cannot make up our minds as to its merits. There is still an obscurity in this composition which we have not been able to penetrate: it may be as poetical, as sublime, as some critics seem to think it...[33]

One reason for the 'obscurity' in Faust and many other works was undoubtedly the shortcomings of the performances. This was a particular problem in the case of Spohr's music which, because of its intricacy of texture and continual chromaticism, requires the utmost nicety in performance to do it justice. As H.F. Chorley remarked in 1846:

> Without a perpetual attention to evenness of phrasing in the least important inner parts, Spohr's music is liable to sound <u>clogged</u> rather than clear: without a perpetual resolution to work out the smallest point which the composition affords, it becomes cloying.[34]

There is ample evidence to suggest that performances in the 1820's seldom if ever did justice to Spohr's music and this was probably also the case during the greater part of the 1830's and 40's as will be seen in later chapters. With regard to <u>Faust</u>, Edward Holmes in <u>The Atlas</u> made it clear that early renderings of the overture were far from satisfactory. Discussing the controversy over its merits he confessed that it was difficult to come to a firm conclusion since; 'the overture has never yet been <u>properly</u> played in England'.[35] It is a pity that the critic of <u>The Harmonicon</u> missed part of the 1831 performance, because on that occasion Holmes wrote:

> The overture to Faust was played here, we may say, for the first time, for it has never before been given but in a very confused and inefficient manner.[36]

<u>The Harmonicon</u>'s attitude to the overture to <u>Jessonda</u> illustrates many of the same points. Its first appearance, in piano duet form, had elicited little encouragement (see p.35 above) and its subsequent performance at the Philharmonic Society on April 17 1826 did not cause the critic to revise his opinion. He commented:

> The overture to Jessonda we can but consider as a mere effort of science, with scarcely one ray of genius shed over it to give it life and animation.[37]

And again at the Yorkshire Amateur Music Meeting in York on July 26 1826 it was dismissed with the sentence: 'Spohr's overture to Jessonda produced no great effect; it is too hard and dry'.[38] This seems an unpropitious beginning for an overture which received more than forty performances at major concerts in London over the next thirty years. However, The Harmonicon's antipathy towards it softened more quickly than was the case with Faust and again there is a suggestion that inadequate performance may have been partly to blame for its early lack of success, for when it was played at the Philharmonic concert on May 12 1828, the critic wrote:

> The overture to Jessonda...has more in it than is unfolded in two or even three hearings. It is a very arduous undertaking for a full band, and scarcely ever goes as it ought till known almost entirely by heart.[39]

A similar progression is apparent in reviews of 'Si lo Sento' (Ja ich fuhl es) from Faust. At the time of its first performance on May 15 1826, The Harmonicon commented;

> Miss Paton got very ably through the laborious task she had to execute in the scena and aria from Spohr's Faust. In this there is much elegance and pathos; the accompaniments are skilfully managed and the good theorist is apparent throughout; but the vivifying principle, invention or genius, is wanting, and without this, new compositions as they are termed, become more fatiguing in proportion as their numbers increase. Spohr has a superabundance of science, but a deficiency in the power of creation; his works, therefore, are generally the result of labour, rarely of inspiration.[40]

When given again on February 19 1827 much the same feelings were more concisely expressed, the critic noting that: 'The composition itself, modelled after Mozart, is rather a proof of science and taste than of genius; it is, however, effective.'[41] But by 1830 the tone adopted towards the work was so different as to make it difficult to believe that the review could be by the same hand. When it was played at the Philharmonic concert of March 1, 1830, The Harmonicon wrote:

> The fine scena from Faust...unfolds new beauties at every fresh hearing...How delicious the air, 'Si lo sento' a larghetto in B flat! - how skilful and lovely the accompaniments! - and the allegro is a movement worthy of the preceding part, though requiring vast strength

> and great exertion in the singer.[42]

Only the admission that appreciation had developed with familiarity, which follows the same pattern as other reviews, argues the identity of its authorship.*

Finally, a great deal of information can be gleaned from an examination of reviews of the First Symphony, the other work of Spohr's which was regularly performed during these years. The frequency of its performance and its publication in octet form by Piggot suggest that it had already become something of a favourite, and a review in The Harmonicon in 1824 had described it as 'a very fine, scientific composition'. From the start it received a better press than others of Spohr's works and the opportunity was taken in reviewing it to make general observations about the composer. In 1828 the critic wrote:

> If Mozart and Beethoven had never existed, Spohr would have ranked as an original composer; for though evidently indebted for his style to the two former...yet he possesses a kind of genius which would have strengthened and dilated if a field had been left open to it... Be this as it may, his symphony in E flat is after...that by Mozart in the same key. It is not imitated, much less copied, but had the latter never been produced, Spohr's would never have been what it is. It might not have had less merit, but its features would have been different. It is notwithstanding, a fine composition, showing the hand of a master... The score is a perfect study for young composers.[43]

The following year these points were reiterated but with a sharper edge to the criticism. The writer commented:

> Spohr's symphony is a fine study after...Mozart. Every movement is a consistent whole and abounds in passages and masterly contrivances, the merit of which is felt at the moment but the particulars escape from the memory before an hour is elapsed. The fact is, that in his instrumental music Spohr is always scientific and elaborate but seldom very original; his scores are too much crowded; his subjects, which are rarely striking are overlaid with accompaniment, and his general effect is want of relief. The symphony, however, was listened to with profound attention, and its excellencies duly appreciated and acknowledged.[44]

Clearly the majority of the audience held the symphony in higher regard than the critic, but one reason for his failure to relish it more wholeheartedly

* This review, however, may be by George Hogarth who wrote for The Harmonicon between 1830 and 1833 and whose admiration for Spohr is shown in his Musical History, Biography & Criticism (1838).

may again have been the rough and ready nature of the performance, for The Atlas reviewing the same concert remarked:

> If the directors continue to select Spohr's sinfonia in E flat, which is a composition well worthy the attention of good ears, we may expect to hear it properly played about the year 1835. Such music as this performed once a season, after a solitary rehearsal, not perhaps again heard during the year, can hardly, while young, create the effect the composer wished; the passages come upon the players with the effect of perfect novelty, which is not favourable to an expressive performance. The slow movement would have admitted of much greater feeling and delicacy in the execution; the melodious bass and graceful flow of the parts here deserve all the refinement of which a band is capable.[45]

By 1830 the efficiency of the performance had probably increased sufficiently to mollify the opinion of The Harmonicon and, as was the case with the overture to Jessonda and 'Si lo sento', repeated hearings were found to reveal fresh beauties. On this occasion the critic confessed:

> Spohr's symphony grows into favour by frequent hearings: there is more of labour and study in it than in the work of the three great masters, but it is often grand, sometimes very beautiful, and highly finished from the first note to the last.[46]

The critic again admitted in 1833 that the symphony 'certainly improves upon acquaintance'.[47]

The increasing appreciation which is indicated in these reviews was probably a general trend among those to whom Spohr's name meant anything at all. But according to Edward Taylor, writing in 1836, Spohr was, up to 1830, 'little known in this country beyond the orchestra and audience of the Philharmonic Concerts';[48] and this is confirmed by a reference in The Athenaeum to the overture Der Berggeist which asserted:

> The overture of Spohr is a splendid composition. We are warm admirers of this author because we are well acquainted with his music: when he is more heard and better known, we are quite sure that the general feeling among our amateurs will be equally in his favour.[49]

However, there was undoubtedly a body of musicians whose enthusiasm for Spohr's music led them to rate him more highly than the majority would have done at this time: their existence can be inferred from the reference to 'very good judges' who had asserted the genius apparent in the overture to Faust (p.39

above). In a few cases it is possible tentatively to identify the views of individuals; in some instances this depends on a single statement or a conjunction of probabilities, in others the evidence is stronger.

An example of the former is the statement in Parke's Musical Memoirs, published in 1830, where he refers to the Philharmonic Concerts as being those at which 'the new symphonies of the great modern masters are performed in an unequalled style of excellence, amongst which are those of Weber, Spohr, Cherubini and Beethoven'.[50] Bishop and Sir George Smart have already been mentioned as probable admirers of Spohr's music and in the case of Smart there is some evidence of his attitude in the journal he kept of his visit to Germany in 1825. In November he visited Kassel and was entertained to several musical evenings by Spohr, at one of which Spohr arranged a special performance of his recently composed Double Quartet in D minor. Smart was impressed, writing: 'effect good - Spohr play'd beautifully - very difficult for four principal instruments.' On another occasion he spent the evening at Spohr's and played through his latest opera Der Berggeist with Spohr singing in a 'raucous, rough bass' assisted by his wife and daughters. Of that he remarked 'I had a tight job with the music which appears fine but is very difficult - I cannot judge till I hear it - in orchestra'.[51]

Among musicians not so closely associated with the Philharmonic Society, Edward Holmes is prominent as an admirer of Spohr. His opinion was given in the statement:

> All the writings of the author of Faust are stamped with thought and invention very much unlike ephemeral compositions, and what faults he has are so completely overbalanced by the fertility and grace of his melodies, that he must rank among the first creative geniuses of the age.[52]

This appeared both in The Quarterly Musical Magazine in 1827 and in his Ramble Among the Musicians of Germany (1828).

In addition to these musicians, all of whom had already attained some level of eminence, there were those young composers whose admiration is shown in their own music, the evidence for which will be examined in a later chapter.

There was also undoubtedly a group of amateurs whose numbers are impossible to estimate, but of whose musical preferences traces remain in faded names written on fly-leaves. On a rare occasion such proprietary inscriptions reveal useful snippets of information. One instance is the copies of Spohr operas in the Royal College of Music signed by Mary and Elizabeth Windsor. On the title page of a copy of Pietro von Abano published by Schlesinger and imported by Boosey & Co., is written in ink 'Elizabeth Windsor January 1829', thus indicating that it must have been available in England within a very short time of its appearance in Germany.

It is difficult to guess how much of Spohr's music was available in England in German editions during the 1820's, but the amount was probably considerable and, as the following passage from The Atlas shows, imported music was much in demand among serious amateurs.

> English music principally finds a market among young ladies who have a morning to waste in shopping, and who are attracted by a title, an ornamental frontispiece or dedication, to place in their portfolio the novelty of which is forgotten before the week is out. What a noble prospect for a composer! The foreign music shops, which from a small beginning a few years ago, have increased so wonderfully, and are now thriving well, have shown how incompetent were existing native publications to satisfy the good taste of the country; and there is a large body of amateurs, who, from one year's end to another, scarcely ever purchase an English piece. Weber's appearance in this country, the success of his operas, the favour of German instrumental music, the manner in which the quartetts, quintetts etc., of Beethoven, Spohr etc., are performed in private parties show the progress of a taste for music of a high character.[53]

This passage also demonstrates some of the changes which were taking place in the cultural climate during the third decade of the century. An increasing seriousness of taste was becoming apparent throughout the artistic spectrum as a corollary to the increasing economic and political power of the middle class. The Reform Bill of 1832 and the development of artistic tastes which rejected Regency frivolity and aristocratic domination were products of similar forces; the technical precision and seriousness of purpose in Spohr's music was mingled with a mildly romantic feeling which aptly matched the temper of

this trend. Whatever else might be said about it there was a feeling that Spohr's music was 'sound', that he was, as Holmes wrote, 'a composer over whom none ever retrograded in taste'.[54]

It would be too easy to imagine, however, that such developments of taste were simply spontaneous and accepted uniformly by everyone. Holmes recognised that the majority must be brought into line by the cognoscenti and that what was deemed good for them might not always be palatable at first. When, in 1831, a Philharmonic concert included three items by Spohr he wrote:

> For ourselves there was not a note that we would have changed; but, we fear, the interests of such music as Spohr's demand that it should be rather insinuated by degrees - carefully and discreetly- than thrust boldly forward, to stand upon its own merits; for we had evidence that a great many of the subscribers are not yet sufficiently advanced in taste to comprehend it, and these hearers only require rather too much on one occasion to be impatient at the sight of the author's name in the bills; consequently, the repetition of the practice will only harden their unbelief and exasperate their prejudice. We throw out this hint as a prudential measure, for we hold that the more unanimous the feeling of pleasure at the end of a movement, the more beneficial the effect upon the art; because the directors gain credit with the audience, which will enable them in time to fashion their taste as they please.[55]

Clearly, therefore, in 1831 Spohr remained a composer who was highly respected by many serious and influential musicians and who was gaining increasing regard from important sections of the press, so that in its review of the 1830 season The Harmonicon could comment that the Philharmonic concerts had 'brought forward some new things of great merit, by Spohr chiefly';[56] yet he had so far failed to obtain widespread popular favour. But by that time events had already taken place which were to lead to his obtaining, by the early 1840's, the generally accepted position of the greatest composer of the age.

Chapter 3

The Last Judgement & Azor & Zemira

The event which initiated a decisive stage in the establishment of Spohr's reputation in England was the introduction of The Last Judgement (Die Letzten Dinge) in 1830.

Spohr had composed the oratorio in 1825-26 to a text by Rochlitz and the first performance took place at Kassel in March 1826. In a letter to Speyer, Spohr wrote of its effect:

> Die Wirkung war, ich muss es selbst sagen, ausserordenlicht! Nie haben ich bei einer früheren Aufführung eines meiner grösseren werke diese Genugtuung gehabt.[1] *

Its next performance at the Rhenish Musical Festival in Dusseldorf in May of the same year was received with such enthusiasm that the festival had to be prolonged so that it could be given for a second time.

News of its success travelled to England, where The Harmonicon carried a report of the first performance stating that the oratorio was:

> marked with all his talent, which is at once vigorous and creative, and abounds with a variety of subjects, which cannot fail to become popular.[2]

This was followed shortly after by another article in praise of the work.[3] However, little more was heard of it for some time, though it was meanwhile being extensively circulated in Germany; but in 1829 Edward Holmes, who had

---

* The effect was extraordinary, though I say it myself! Never before have I had such satisfaction from the first performance of one of my major works.

undoubtedly heard of its success during his continental travels and had probably procured the German edition of the oratorio at that time, reviewed it at length in The Atlas. The review was not wholly uncritical but the overall message was that the oratorio must be regarded as a work of great significance. Holmes was not entirely convinced that the music was always 'equal to the sublimity of the subject', but felt that 'some movements of it could be scarcely improved'. He concluded:

> We doubt whether...any composer now living possesses the same knowledge of the secret affinities between matters of the external world and the invisible world of music or whether any can find utterance for human passion in music than Spohr. In this he is like Mozart. We again recommend this oratorio to the notice of the directors of musical festivals as a good subject well set, calculated to please every person of imagination and taste,[4] and peculiarly adapted to gain fame in this country.

As in the case of Spohr's concert aria 'Tu m'abbandonai ingrato', performed for the first time by the Philharmonic society in 1829, which Holmes had recommended in The Quarterly Musical Magazine in 1827,[5] his desire to have Die Letzten Dinge performed in England was soon gratified, for in the following year The Last Judgement (as it came to be called in England) was announced for the Norwich Festival of September 1830. The person directly behind the production of the oratorio at Norwich, however, was Edward Taylor who had already formed a personal acquaintanship with Spohr and had been actively promoting his music in London where, according to The Harmonicon, he was responsible for the introduction of the duet from Der Berggeist, 'O calma o bella' performed at the Philharmonic Society on March 29 1830.[6]*

Despite the glowing reports from the continent which had appeared in The Harmonicon, and Edward Holmes's 'strenuous recommendations', there are indications that the initial reaction to the proposed performance of the work was less than enthusiastic. By 1830 little of Spohr's music had been performed outside London; the overtures played at the Yorkshire music meetings in 1825 and 1826 were exceptional and in any case do not seem to have been particularly well received.

* Taylor's connection with Spohr is dealt with in chapter 5 and appendix A.

A few quartets and piano arrangements may have been familiar to provincial amateurs, but what little was known of him as an instrumental and opera composer was clearly insufficient to inspire confidence in his abilities as a composer of oratorio. The music critic of The Spectator observed, in 1843, that in the 1820's Spohr's music had encountered the prejudice that a 'professed fiddler' could not be a fine composer and pointed out that in 1830 The Last Judgement had come up against similar objections. He continued:

> Here, again, Spohr had to encounter a former prejudice: "Spohr was a fine performer on the violin, and therefore incompetent to produce a fine oratorio. Who ever heard of Viotti, Jarnowick, De Beriot, Paganini, composing an oratorio? Ne sutor", &c. Many were the misgivings significant the shrugs, gloomy the forebodings, as to the result of this "bold and very hazardous experiment." The singers, principal and choral, were against it. It did not contain a single song, and the choruses were awfully difficult. There was no previous feeling or sympathy in its favour - no puff - no flourish of trumpets. It was left to tell its own tale, and to stand or fall by its own merits.[7]

Cox also echoed these sentiments when he recorded that:

> On the occasion of this oratorio being first performed, it was not given in its entirety, it having been doubted whether a provincial audience could bear the strain of novelty in that direction, especially as it was not presented with the impress of metropolitan recommendation.[8]

It is difficult to conceive the enormously powerful impression which in the event, The Last Judgement actually did make. Preceding the Victorian age by seven years, it can truly be said to have ushered in the age of Victorian oratorio. Only the allegiance to Handel's works had sustained the oratorio tradition in England, for as Cox observed, the writing of oratorio 'had never been attempted with the smallest success by any composers, either foreign or English since the days of Handel.'[9] It must have seemed to many that in The Last Judgement there had at last appeared a work which was 'of undoubted genius, and even worthy of being placed side by side with any of Handel's compositions - the Messiah, Samson, and Israel in Egypt alone excepted.'[10] A few, such as the critic in The Harmonicon who noted that the chorus 'Destroyed is Babylon' 'moved every bosom by a sublimity of effect which none since Haydn wrote his Creation and Crotch his Palestine, has been able to produce',[11]

might have cited other successful oratorios produced since Handel's day. Even Haydn's Creation, however, did not have the same marked impart as The Last Judgement at this period, probably because Haydn's style was found to be too light and naive to satisfy the highly serious approach to religion which characterised the middle years of the nineteenth century.

Later writers who did not personally experience the enthusiasm which Spohr's music created among the musicians of an earlier generation have tended to underestimate the oratorio's impact. The epithets which were much later applied to The Last Judgement and to Spohr's music in general - that it was sweet and sickly, lacking in dramatic power and so on - are in striking contrast to the feelings which, when new, the oratorio induced in its audiences. A.W. Patterson, who was better disposed towards the work than most of her contemporaries, wrote in 1902:

> '...we are bound to confess that it possesses much charming musicianship. But when we come to consider the awful grandeur - the tremendous nature - of the subject-matter treated, the lack of what one might name "Handelian power" is evident....the chorus "Destroyed is Babylon" is fuller of sweet pathos than a striking tone-picture of a terrible cataclysm.'[12]

It seems that, with their musical perceptions surfeited by what had come after, later generations could not recapture the feelings that had animated its first audiences. Macfarren, writing in his old age on the dramatic qualities of oratorios, could no longer experience directly the power which it had exerted fifty years earlier, but he nevertheless retained the memory of it, observing:

> The Last Judgement is, save one scene not dramatic, and it has succeeded, but this was when Spohr was new here and his peculiarities made an almost madness among musicians.[13]

The full extent of its initial impact, however, is conveyed in the report of the first performance which appeared in The Harmonicon.

> The Last Judgement,...we consider as one of the greatest musical productions of the age. It would be presumptious in us, having heard it but once, were we to attempt a minute detail of all the beauties of this elaborate work, in which

> is embodied every passion, sentiment and feeling, and however elevated the name of Spohr may justly be as a composer of the highest class of instrumental music, this sublime oratorio will add immensely to his reputation and henceforth his name will be inserted in the list of those authors whose studies, efforts and genius have been most conspicuously successful in this the noblest branch of art.[14]

And, quoting extracts from the chorus 'Destroyed is Babylon', the editor was lavish with his praises saying of one passage 'the following modulations... as beautiful as they are original, form a passage that will not easily be matched in the whole range of musical composition'. That the critic was far from alone in his opinion is confirmed by the account which appeared in The Spectator thirteen years later, which stated:

> It was diligently prepared and carefully rehearsed: the day of performance came - and there was but one opinion. It bore down all opposition - subdued every prejudice; musicians of all schools - foreign, English, ancient, modern - all yielded their willing homage to the genius of its author: Vaughan and Knyvett, Braham, Stockhausen, were united and equal encomiasts. Perhaps the most emphatic testimony to its power was given by Malibran, whom it completely subdued, and who was obliged, sobbing and almost hysterical, to quit the orchestra. "I thought she said to the person who now records her words, "that I had been too practised a stager to make such a fool of myself before an audience: but I had yet to learn the full power of music upon the heart - I have now felt it all."[15]

Even H.F. Chorley, who was no lover of Spohr's music, was forced to confess with respect to The Last Judgement: 'We thought it impossible ever to be tired of the composer's peculiar and rich harmonies, of his exquisitely symmetrical constructions'.[16] Edward Taylor, in a more partisan spirit, wrote in 1836:

> Perhaps there is no instance of a similar work, under like circumstances, having attained such speedy celebrity and such high estimation as the "Last Judgement". Before the performance of this Oratorio at the Norwich Festival in 1830, Spohr was little known in this country beyond the orchestra and audience of the Philharmonic Concerts, while as a sacred composer he was unknown. Yet, produced without the sanction of metropolitan approbation, new to every performer and every auditor, it at once seized the public attention, and commanded the admiration of the most distinguished professors of every school. Its influence on the feelings of an audience has been attested by expressions more decided and unequivocal than I ever remember to have witnessed. I speak not of the admiration which the musician derives from such a display of

> the power and the resources of his art, but of the homage which nature, though musically untutored. involuntarily yet willingly pays to genius. The throbbing heart, the moistened eye, the quivering lip, here bespeak the triumph of the Composer.[17]

All these accounts show conclusively that far from being the sugary, sentimental music, lacking in dramatic power, which later generations conceived it to be, The Last Judgement appeared to contemporaries as a work of towering genius and passionate intensity. It was a work besides which other contemporary oratorios seemed weak and ineffective. The Harmonicon remarked of Chevalier Neukomm's briefly admired Mount Sinai, performed at Gloucester in 1832 along with The Last Judgement:

> Against the gigantic power of Spohr it was unable to stand and its effect was consequently feeble. It is no discredit to it to fall short of the standard of Haydn, Mozart, or Spohr.[18]

Another testimony to its effect was given in a review in The Musical World of a Philharmonic concert in 1836 at which Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony had been performed. This commented:

> The storm scene in the 'Pastoral Symphony' is perhaps the finest and most powerful specimen of musical description that ever was written. We recollect no parallel to it in sublimity, unless it be the concluding symphony to the grand chorus in Spohr's Last Judgement....and the first movement of his sinfonia characteristique /i.e. Die Weihe der Töne/[19]

Hogarth, too, testified to the real dramatic impact which Spohr's oratorios appeared to possess at the time of their introduction, saying, in 1838:

> The Last Judgement and The Crucifixion are not surpassed, in the sublimity of many of their parts by anything that has appeared since the days of Handel. Though the music of these pieces never descends from the solemnity which belongs to their subjects, yet it possesses great variety of expression, passing from the most awful and terrible effects to strains of the deepest pathos and melancholy.[20]

Enough examples of contemporary opinion have been cited to give a clear view of the oratorio's impact; more objective evidence can be provided by a list of performances it received during the years immediately following its introduction. In 1830 it was performed at Norwich and Liverpool; in 1831 at the Philharmonic Society (the only time an oratorio was ever given at

these concerts) again in London at Vaughan's benefit,* also at Dublin, Derby, Oxford and Manchester; in 1832 at Gloucester; in 1833 at Worcester and again at Liverpool; in 1834 at Hereford; in 1835 at Cambridge and York; in 1836 at the Royal Academy of Music and the Sacred Harmonic Society in London, at Mitcham and again at Manchester and Worcester. No doubt there were other less important performances which did not leave their mark in the national press.

The English version of the oratorio was brought out almost immediately by Novello in vocal score, and full band parts were certainly available by 1836. In England it made so deep an impression that Spohr's name was indissolubly linked with this, his most widely popular work.** In 1843 he travelled through parts of the south of England and the Autobiography described the trip thus:

> Though in accordance with the advice of the Queen he had thought to make this little journey incognito, nevertheless his arrival soon became known in each town, and the composer of "Die Letzten Dinge", the pianoforte arrangement of which he found in almost every house, was received by everyone after his own manner, with the highest honours.[21]

In the long run, the tremendous success of The Last Judgement was to make it almost synonymous with the name of its composer, but the immediate effect was to cause a flurry of public interest in Spohr and his works. It was almost certainly in consequence of this that it was decided to bring

* For this concert an advertisement in The Morning Chronicle (21:IV:1831) read: 'Mr Vaughan's Benefit...when will be performed by the desire of several distinguished amateurs, the selection from Spohr's oratorio, THE LAST JUDGEMENT, which was received with such marked and flattering approbation at the third Philharmonic Concert.'

** This is confirmed by a footnote in the English translation of Naumann's History of Music, (1884) where the editor Ousley remarked: 'Our author omits to mention the date of the composition of what has been considered in England as Spohr's greatest work - The Last Judgement. In England it has been very frequently performed, and still in a great measure retains its original popularity.' (op.cit. ii, 989.)

out a version of his opera Zemire und Azor at Covent Garden in April 1831, under the title Azor and Zemira, or the Magic Rose. The announcement of the production 'caused great excitement amongst the dilettante and professors of the metropolis,'[22] since this would be the first chance of hearing any of Spohr's operas staged in England.

The English version was not in fact a straight-forward translation of the opera, but a free adaptation which even included some of the music of Faust.

As far as can be determined from contemporary reviews, Cox's recollection of a very high level of interest among serious musicians is thoroughly reliable. The interest aroused was certainly considerable enough to justify the publication of a volume containing the complete music of the opera, and to cause The Harmonicon to publish a substantial number of extracts from it in its musical supplement for 1831. The Morning Chronicle, reviewing the first night, concluded:

> G. PENSON gave out the Opera for Thursday and Saturday, without any expression of dissent, and with very warm applause. We saw in the House many musical professors of eminence, both native and foreign, all interested for the success of imported SPOHR.[23]

The Times noted that 'the Opera was exceedingly well received by a very crowded audience',[24] while later during its run, The Atlas observed:

> The musical professors so abundant here on the first night have sent their pupils and friends by dozens - the boxes are full, there is a good independent pit, and no want of encores: let therefore, Spohr's compositions and Covent Garden flourish together.[25]

Indeed, such was the success of the opera that The Harmonicon felt justified in stating that the event 'might be almost considered as a musical era in the history of that theatre'.[26]

Nevertheless, Spohr's opera was not deemed to be beyond criticism. Edward Holmes took the opportunity to comment at length upon the strengths and weaknesses of Spohr's style in general in The Atlas; the inference that his music made its strongest appeal to the musically sophisticated

listener may be clearly educed from his judicious analysis. He wrote:

> Spohr is indeed one of the most remarkable artists of the age; and if he possessed variety of style equal to the depth of his feeling and the grace and elegance of his melody, he would be another Mozart. Like that great master his temperament is also melancholy, and his dominant passion for music of a strongly expressive and mournful cast. So admirable is he in this style, that he not infrequently recalls the best manner of Mozart: but, as is the case with many who feel deeply sentiments of one class, and want of equal sympathy with others...we expect to find that the fault of his operas is that the movements are imprinted with an identity of character, and a fondness for certain modulations and cadences, which in a long production will be found detrimental to effect... He has written much violin and chamber music, and employed in it the most refined melody, and the utmost ingenuity and thought, that human invention can devise; and in his dramatic music, there is scarcely a casual symphony which does not bear the marks of the same elaboration. In this respect he surpasses Mozart or Weber; but the effect of his pains is not to improve upon their models. If he were to score with less care, to lay on his colours more massively and broadly, he would oftener attain his end. His faults are the reverse of the modern school of Italy, and his abortions, if any passages can be called such, proceed from a stupefaction of ideas. To listen to his music requires all ones ears, and the excellencies and touches of the artist follow upon one another so thickly, that there is hardly leisure for the admiration which each demands.[27]

Whatever quibbles might have been raised against the opera in point of detail, there is no doubt that it was materially successful. In 1853 The Musical World could still say that 'Azor and Zemira may still be remembered as one of the most lucrative musical pieces ever brought out at Covent Garden when Covent Garden was an English Theatre'.[28] Also, by introducing Spohr to the opera house as well as to the concert hall and the church, it widened still further the extent of public knowledge of his standing in the musical world. The daily papers in reviewing the opera took the opportunity to enlighten their readers with such snippets of information as 'Spohr is at the moment considered the first living composer in Germany',[29] which they had not previously had the occasion to do, since as noted earlier it was not their practise to review Philharmonic concerts in the 1820's. The Morning Chronicle dilated upon the same theme, giving evidence of the dichotomy between the major part of the musical public, whose predilections were for

light and undemanding music, and the smaller but influential portion who were the arbiters of cultivated taste. There is perhaps a hint in the following passage that the critic was not wholeheartedly in support of the musical Germanophiles.

> Sir GEORGE SMART...has laid the town under no little obligation to him for making it better acquainted with the excellencies of one of the greatest and most original composers of modern times. To call him great and original in these days, is almost, in other words, to say that SPOHR is German. We do not pretend to say that the music of SPOHR is calculated to be as popular in this country as that of ROSSINI, from the very circumstance that it has greater depth and power of genius; but the German has not the gaiety and brilliancy of fancy of the Italian, which captivates at once, and requires little trouble to be understood.[30]

A little later in the same review he returned to a similar point remarking:

> ... what are called "airs" in the printed book of songs, sometimes want melody, and are a little overlaid by the orchestral accompaniments. The concerted pieces are learnedly worked up, and some of them are very agreeable; but on the whole there was a want of variety.

It seems clear that he was not alone in his opinion, for the following week Holmes felt constrained to come forward with 'A Defence of Spohr' in The Atlas, couched in heavily sarcastic vein, writing:

> A charge of want of melody has been brought against Spohr, the author of Azor and Zemira; about as justly as if we should say of the Rev. Mr Irving that he wanted words, or of one like the memorable Daniel Lambert that he wanted fat. Melody in the sense of the objectors means something like "Meet me by Moonlight" or "Come where the Aspens Quiver;" and embraces all such successions of harmonious sounds as may be ground by a street organ, and brought home to the ear without difficulty... They listen to Spohr in the buckles and ruffles of their grandfathers. It is hard upon the cause of good music that a fine work should suffer from the pique or spleen of writers who do not understand it. The composer affronts them by his invention and contrivance; a new harmony is like a knock in the face; the modulation becomes puzzling - the critic confused and resentful, and so makes up his mind to say, "this man has no melody." It is sufficient that the opinion will be deemed well founded by the common rout of hearers - the numbers on the side of the writer will secure him from the ill effects of the laughter of the better sort... The article we gave last week upon the Azor and Zemira, we now feel convinced did not do justice to the excellencies of the music but (in the usual spirit of criticism) dwelt too much upon the

> defects of the author, showing at the same time, our own sagacity in detecting them.[31]

The divergences which are apparent in these extracts formed much of the basis for discussion in the press during the 1830's and Spohr was to come in for a great deal of fierce criticism, but with the difference that whereas before 1830 interest was confined to a relatively small number of musicians and connoisseurs and was centred on his instrumental compositions, after the success of The Last Judgement and Azor and Zemira his music was much more widely known and his reputation as an all-round composer of the first rank firmly established. Indeed, it could even be said that, with reference to the opera, 'Those...who were best qualified to pronounce upon the quality of the work, were decidedly of the opinion, that "Spohr had shown his strength more in vocal than in instrumental music"'.[32] Though the public as a whole may have preferred the music of Rossini and other composers whose work did not appear to make such strenuous demands on the intellect, they had now perforce to recognise the pre-eminence of Spohr as a great and profound composer, even when they may not have cared for his music. But there is reason to believe that the growing self-consciousness and moral earnestness, which were increasingly a characteristic feature of the age, were conducive to an appreciation of the very features in Spohr's music which matched those qualities.

Chapter 4

1830 - 1843

> Spohr is a great man; but few are so great that they cannot be overrated and assuredly Spohr is not one of them.[1]

This opinion was hazarded in a review of the first performance of The Christian's Prayer in 1836; it typifies a category of remark which became increasingly common during the 1830's. The almost universal eulogy which had greeted The Last Judgement raised Spohr's standing virtually overnight in England; but having been placed upon a pedestal, hailed as great and original, the first composer of Germany and author of the finest oratorio since Handel, it was only natural that there should be a reaction from those critics who were not numbered among his most fervent admirers. Though few could now deny him a large measure of eminence and some were almost uncritical in their praise, the strictures of unsympathetic reviewers began to attain a sharpness which they had seldom possessed when Spohr was relatively obscure and his fame largely confined to the orchestra and audience of the Philharmonic Society. Indeed, few composers have attracted more vehement admiration and opprobrium at the same time than Spohr received during this period. In 1840, on the occasion of the first staging of Faust in England, H.F. Chorley commented on

> the vicissitude through which the composer's reputation has passed among us, and the violent partizanship of which it has been the object. By some he has been extolled to the seventh heaven, as surpassing Mozart, Weber, and Beethoven, in right of sweet melodies, rich harmonies, and magnificent conceptions - by others, degraded to the level of those respectable, but most wearisome persons, who produce a multitude of carefully-executed works, upon the liberal allowance of half an idea.[2]

Before considering the causes and significance of these widely divergent opinions, however, it will be as well to draw an outline of the most important events connected with Spohr's music which occurred between 1831 to 1840 and take note of some of the reactions which were elicited by them. Once this framework is established, it should be possible to perceive with greater clarity how ideas then current about Spohr related to general developments in English musical life.

One important new work, first performed publicly in 1831, was the Third Symphony op.78 in C minor (composed in 1828). It had previously been played at a Philharmonic trial night in February 1830, on which occasion it attracted the attention of the critics of The Harmonicon and The Athenaeum (probably Ella at this date). Their reactions were distinctly different; the former, with the customary caution of that journal, remarked of the symphony:

> Spohr's has many beautiful parts, and the whole is decidedly the work of a great master; but he never knows when to quit a subject, and in the present instance is frequently tedious.[3]

The latter, on the other hand, was entirely won over by it, saying:

> The second piece was a magnificent, perfect, and sublime work of Spohr's, (his 3^{me} sinfonie, op.78) comprising an andante grave in C minor, in which especially deserving of notice was a fine pedal bass of A flat accompanied by the choicest and richest modulations for a considerable period, an erudite allegro in 6-8, an elegant and original larghetto in F 9-8, which gave great delight and was twice performed, scherzo menuets, and a striking finale allegro in C major. The performance was carefully led by Mr F. Cramer, and was confessedly the gem of the evening.[4]

From the last sentence it is apparent that there was general agreement among

those present at the trial about the excellence of the symphony; this makes it all the more surprising that the work was not included in any Philharmonic programme of the 1830 season. In the event, it received its first public performance at the City Amateur Concerts on February 10 of the following year. The only journal that seems to have noticed the performance there was The Harmonicon, which cursorily dismissed the work, saying that it was 'like all his compositions, deeply learned; but it requires more than one hearing to appreciate it accurately; and we doubt whether like Beethoven's, it would reward us for repeated attention'.[5]

The Philharmonic Society finally presented the symphony on May 23 at the penultimate concert of the season, when it received more attention from the press. This time The Athenaeum dismissed it in a few words (surely a different reviewer than at the trial night) saying that it was 'undoubtedly a clever work, but more clever than pleasing - more classical than attractive'.[6] The Atlas and The Harmonicon dilated on it at greater length, but from radically different standpoints. Holmes, as usual, showed his sympathy with the composer, though not entirely without an implied criticism of some facets of his work, saying:

> The new symphony of Spohr is, in our opinion, his best effort: it is at once natural, beautiful, and remote from the ordinary tracks of thought - qualities which demonstrate the highest success in this department of composition... As a whole, this work seems little remarkable for the mannerism of the author in the perpetual recurrence of the closes peculiar to his music, and that circle of crudities in modulation through which he often runs. The movements which remain most strongly impressed upon our memory, are the andante and the finale in the major; the former of a high originality, both in design and melody - the latter, a felicitous subject treated with the skill of a consummate artist.[7]

It is noticeable that, though more restrained in its tone, this review agrees very closely with the opinion of the writer in The Athenaeum who had attended the trial; even to the extent of singling out the Andante and Finale for special praise.

In complete contrast was the assessment contained in The Harmonicon, the author of which chose to treat the performance as an excuse to comment at length on Spohr's position and acquirements in general, summing up his objections to the symphony by remarking:

> his instrumental compositions of all kinds smell abominably of the lamp: in those, either his fancy is obstinately sluggish, or else his love of what is sometimes improperly termed science - an industrious complication of harmony - entirely masters his imagination, and leaves him in possession of little else than a dry, unfruitful, learned manner of putting a score together.[8]

Though hardly a fair review of the symphony in question, this notice clearly showed the viewpoint of many of those who did not succumb to Spohr's attractions.

1831 had been an important year for Spohr's music, seeing the first London performances of The Last Judgement, Azor and Zemira and the Third Symphony. The overture to Der Alchymist, too, had been played for the first time and noticed somewhat snootily in The Athenaeum as 'equally clever with the generality of this gentleman's compositions, and in parts more pleasing'.[9]

The following year his opera Der Alchymist was announced at Drury Lane, but any hopes which might have been raised in the musical world that it would be a worthy successor to Azor and Zemira were speedily dashed. The Morning Chronicle observed: 'The music...is entirely Spohr's, but it is selected from many of his operas - Faust, Jessonda, Pietro von Abano, Der Berggeist, etc.'.[10] It was not successful and The Times lamented its failure with the comment:

> We are compelled to observe that the opera of last night was by no means such as might be reasonably expected to have been made up by a person of such taste as Mr Bishop from the works of such a composer as Spohr.[11]

Both newspapers agreed that the music could not survive this sort of distortion and it was remarked that inevitably 'Skilful musicians and good judges are sensible of the incongruity as the compound performance proceeds'.[12] In fact,

it failed to satisfy anyone: the connoisseur was prevented from enjoying the music, though it was admitted to be 'of a masterly and original character',[13] by the deficiencies of the production as a whole; while the less cultivated members of the audience would probably have agreed with the critic that it was 'a very heavy and confused performance, with a tedious quantity of good music - for even good music may become tedious'.[14] The audience reaction may be gauged from the comment that when the opera was announced for repetition on the following Saturday, it was 'not without the expression of strong and general hostility'.[15]

No other attempt was made to bring Spohr's operas to the stage in England until a German opera company put on Faust and Jessonda in 1840, but these were in the original versions and aimed at a different audience than the ventures of 1831 and 1832. It was probably realised that no amount of cosmetic embellishment could make them attractive to the unrefined sensibilities of the majority of those who patronised the English opera, and therefore that until there was a change in taste they could not be commercially successful. This point was made by a writer in The Analyst, who observed:

> His opera of "Azor and Zemira" is the only one of his dramatic works that has been brought forward on the English stage; and although this was effected with no ordinary zeal and care, attended by gorgeous scenery, it did not receive that patronage from the public due to its merits; while the theatre itself was not benefited by the experiment. A total revolution must take place in the whole European taste for vocal music, which even in the recesses of Germany, is fast welcoming the modern Italian school, before the opera music of Spohr becomes what may be called the stock property of the theatres.[16]

A contributor to The Musical World made much the same point, but in a more pungent style, commenting:

> The "Azor and Zemira" and the "Alchymist," were, on their production on the London stage severally well supported and performed; but that music which suits the refined voluptuousness of the drawing-room, goes no way in meeting the broad stirring passions which agitate the pit and galleries of Covent Garden or Drury Lane... Jessonda, Alma, Inez, Cecilia, and Kunegunda, may wail themselves into hysterics, syncopes, or convulsions, without arousing the sympathies of John

> Bull; and lucky will they be if they can but muzzle the deep growl of his ill-smothered indignation.[17]

1833 and 1834 saw no new works by Spohr of major importance introduced to the English public. The Octet op.32, given for the first time at Mori's concert on May 17 1833 passed without raising any discernible interest and the Second Clarinet Concerto, performed at the Philharmonic on February 25 1833 produced only the slightest ripple; The Athenaeum remarked simply that 'the effect of the composition was much to our liking',[18] but The Harmonicon while finding the Adagio 'a rich and lovely movement', remarked that as a whole the concerto 'was by all felt to be too long'.[19]

But in general, adverse criticism seems to have been muted during these years and so far as his music was noticed in the press it was mainly in a tone of appreciation. The same two journals, which had received the first performance of the Third Symphony so coolly in 1831 gave it a warmer reception in 1833 when it was played at the Philharmonic Society on April 29. The Athenaeum, expressed itself 'much delighted with Spohr's sinfonia',[20] while The Harmonicon directly contradicted its former statement (see p. 61 above), saying:

> Spohr's symphony...is richer in melody and more free from that complication which smells so much of the lamp...than any of his instrumental works. His designs are here more clearly expressed and readily understood, and we listen to the whole with pleasure.[21]

The Harmonicon also displayed qualified approval of the First Symphony, admitting that: 'Written, as it is, and as most of this composer's works are, after Mozart's models, it is still not devoid of original traits: while in fulness of harmony and that kind of finish which well-directed labour produces, it has never been surpassed'.[22] 1834 was even less eventful, the only minor novelty being the first performance in Hereford of The Last Judgement, where, apparently, it 'was much relished'.[23]

The 1835 season, however, saw the introduction of a work which came to

be seen as one of Spohr's masterpieces; his Fourth Symphony, Die Weihe der Töne.* Its initial reception from the press was mixed but on the whole favourable. Many of the critics were unstinting in their praise and despite Hogarth's comment years later that it 'met at first with much criticism',[24] several reviewers hailed it with real enthusiasm. The Morning Chronicle was of the opinion that 'This singular subject has called forth the highest efforts of SPOHR's genius', and he continued:

> This sublime composition was performed with wonderful precision and fire, and greatly applauded. It must, however, be heard over and over again before its design can be fully understood and its beauties thoroughly appreciated. We might say it is somewhat too long, did we not remember how completely this objection, made to the "Pastoral Symphony" and some other works, disappeared when they came to be fully understood.[25]

The critic of The Athenaeum (probably Chorley by this date) was even more enthusiastic, saying:

> The commencement of the season has been a brilliant one, as far as regards this establishment, a new work having been brought forward at its first Concert on Monday evening, which is entitled to the first rank in compositions of the highest order. Of course we mean Spohr's characteristic Symphony, and of this we may say in limine, that a second hearing fully justified our favourable opinion, as expressed upon its trial. We were more excited, if possible, than before, and more alive to the high poetical feeling, and grand bold effects, which are to be found in every part of the composition.[26]

After discussing the programmatic conception and the details of individual movements at great length, the review concluded:

* Die Weihe der Töne was based on a poem by Karl Pfeiffer. Spohr had originally intended to set it as a cantata, but after beginning work on it decided to illustrate it within the form of a symphony.
The movements are as follows:
First Movement; Largo - The deep silence of nature before the birth of sound, Allegro - The awakening of life, the sounds of nature, the uproar of the elements.
Second Movement; Andantino - Cradle song, Allegro - Dance, Andantino - Serenade.
Third Movement; Tempo di Marcia - Martial music, March to battle, Emotions of those left behind, Return of the conquerors, Andante maestoso - Song of thanksgiving.
Fourth Movement; Larghetto - Funeral dirge, Allegretto - Consolation in grief.
In England it was variously known as The Power of Sound or, later, The Consecration of Sound.

> we cannot leave it, without regretting that the limited powers of language forbid our doing full justice to its beauty and variety, and without expressing our extreme satisfaction at the manner in which its difficulties were overcome, and its meaning conveyed to the audience by the orchestra.[27]

This review does not contain a single adverse criticism; at one point the critic exclaimed that the final section of the third movement (the Song of Thanksgiving) 'will always be remembered by us as one of the most magnificent things in music'. However, the report does suggest (though The Morning Chronicle had noticed that the symphony was 'greatly applauded') that the audience were not unanimous in their appreciation of the work. In describing the second movement (with its three conflicting tempi) The Athenaeum remarked:

> The band under able conduct, performed it with admirable precision, and without constraint or stiffness, and the effect was natural and delightful. We observed, however, some of the elder of the audience listening to it with a sort of melancholy surprise, as if to say, "Is music come to this?"[28]

The critic of The Spectator similarly observed signs of dissension among the audience, and predicted that the work would continue to provoke discussion, saying:

> On the merits of this composition we anticipate, at present, considerable diversity of opinion, partly arising from the novelty of its character, and partly from the inability of many who heard, to understand it... We heard exclamations against the absurdity of attempting to express "consolation in grief" by musical sounds.[29]

Overall, The Spectator was entirely in agreement with The Athenaeum, describing the work as 'one of the highest flights of musical poetry that imagination has conceived or genius accomplished'. This critic, too singled out the 'Song of Thanksgiving' for special praise, exclaiming: 'we know of nothing so complete, so powerful, so elevating as this movement, taken in its connexion'.

Further evidence that disagreement about the symphony was quite marked, however, is given in an article on 'The English Orchestra' in The New Monthly Magazine; it indicates that opinion diverged most strongly on the propriety of its programmatic intentions. The writer observed:

> This symphony has given rise to a species of controversy as to how far the real province of descriptive music extends. Its effect on the audience was very various. Those who enjoy music as much by association as for itself, preferred their old friends, Haydn and Mozart; the simple musician admired only according to the rules of composition, but those who read music in alliance with poetry, whether it be linked with the words or not, found no interruption to their enjoyment in the translation of the ode appended to the bill for the evening, and traced perhaps more in Spohr than in the poet himself, because one modulation will frequently describe what it takes a whole stanza to explain. But criticisms clashed on the subject and one writer hazarded the opinion that "the legitimate domain of instrumental music is the vague and indefinite".[30]

The writer referred to in the last sentence was the critic of The Atlas, probably still Edward Holmes, whose attitude towards the work was less enthusiastic than that of most of his colleagues. He seems to have had an aversion to the programmatic scheme of the work and had formed an unfavourable idea of the literary merit of the ode on which it was based, commenting:

> Satisfied that the musician would be more intelligible than the poet, we crumpled up the ode... Nor did the event deceive us. Spohr was perfectly intelligible, even in passages in which the deep chaos of Mr Pfieffer's mind seemed as if it would scarcely admit a ray of meaning.

In general, he was constrained to 'confess some feeling of disappointment with the symphony', saying that

> It appears to us to fulfil its design but partially and imperfectly, and not be quite what one would expect from a man who has produced such first-rate instrumental works as Spohr.

He did, however, agree with The Athenaeum and The Spectator that the 'Song of Thanksgiving' was 'the finest and newest conception of the whole'.[31]

Even more evidence of divergent opinions can be found in the private comments of individuals. Moscheles, who was present at the Philharmonic trial when it was first played through under Sir George Smart, left an account of his impressions in which appreciation is tempered with reservations. He wrote:

> This able conductor succeeded at this first rehearsal

> in carrying the band through the whole work correctly although of course without that delicacy, light, and shade requisite for so intricate a work, The Andante of which, with its 3-8 and 9-16 time, constituted in itself a considerable difficulty. I followed the performance with the score, and was delighted with the solidity of the entire work, as well as the beauty of its details; still the too great predominance of Spohrish colour and form to some extent quenched my enthusiasm. Nothing but genius and wealth of invention can kindle me into rapture.[32]

Other auditors of the work at this time whose opinions have been preserved were the Horsley sisters.* Their reaction to the symphony was, like Moscheles', equivocal; it seems probable that their attitudes may be taken as typical of many of the reasonably musically cultivated members of the Philharmonic audience. Sophy Horsley wrote: 'On second hearing, I do not like Spohr's symphony nearly so well, but there are parts decidedly fine', while her sister Fanny seems to have been rather bored by it, finding it 'a most tedious concern certainly, though fine in parts'.[33]

Whatever the differences of opinion about the merits of Die Weihe der Töne , however, the symphony raised a great deal of interest and, whether admired or not, it brought Spohr once more to the forefront of public attention and confirmed his position as an innovator. (Evidence of this interest can be educed from The Morning Post's comment in 1837 that: 'There are two compositions for which every person is asking:- we mean Spohr's Sinfonia "The Power of Sound," and Beethoven's Sinfonia Characteristique of "The Passion of Joy."' /i.e. No. 9/[34]) It was repeated during the 1835 season at the Societa Armonica concert on April 20 and two movements were included in the programme of Mori's concert on May 15. At this concert Mori also gave the English première of a 'new concerto' by Spohr, described by The Athenaeum as 'a very fine composition'. This was either the Ninth Concerto, op.55 or the Eleventh, op.77, since the review mentioned that the subject of the last movement was 'written for double stops'.[35] Neither of these were new though, having been composed in 1820 and 1826 respectively.

* They were daughters of William Horsley, the composer of glees etc., and sisters of Charles, who studied composition at Leipzig and Kassel.

It is clear that Spohr was constantly becoming more familiar to English audiences. But outside the ranks of the musical profession and of more serious amateurs it was not the symphonies, overtures and chamber music that were most likely to spread his reputation, nor even the extracts from his operas which were rapidly becoming an almost indispensable part of the vocal sections that still formed part of most instrumental concerts. It was through his sacred music that Spohr could most readily reach the large potential audience which was growing up among the middle class. The success of The Last Judgement and of extracts from his operas had already, in 1831, caused The Harmonicon to suggest that 'Spohr's forte is in vocal music'.[36] Five years later The Spectator gave expression to the opinion which was probably general among most music lovers, with the exception of connoisseurs of instrumental music, that:

> Great as Spohr is as an instrumental and dramatic writer, he is, incomparably, greatest when "his lyre is tuned with heavenly strings." Here he has no living rival.[37]*

The audience for oratorio was much larger and more varied than that of the Philharmonic Society, if only because of cheaper prices of admission; as Chorley remarked:

> The progress of the Sacred Harmonic Society is, of itself, a sufficient answer to the question, 'Are we growing musical or not in England?' Two years ago it consisted of a handful of amateurs with an organ out of tune and a few bad instrumentalists to serve for orchestra: but its members went the right way to work - studied good music, and that zealously; and now they are strong enough in resource and proficiency to throw open the large room in Exeter Hall, and secure the additional assistance of the best instrumentalists and solo singers, to perform classical works before crowded audiences, at a price moderate beyond all precedent. Think of an Oratorio well got up for three shillings! And yet we hear that the spirited amateurs put money in their purse at every one of their public exhibitions.[38]

* Though not all critics agreed with this opinion; Gauntlett for one maintained that: 'Greatly as Spohr shines as an operatic writer (and he is a giant in dramatic expression) still he is essentially an instrumentalist... Although his oratorios afford exquisite delight - so much so that criticism is apt to glide into panegyric - yet in plain honesty of truth, the composer appears to less advantage in this style than in either of those to which we have previously alluded'. (MW, ii(1836), 194)

The Last Judgement's extraordinary success was not followed up until 1836, but during the six years after that date all Spohr's other important sacred works were initially introduced to the English public. The first of these was Vater Unser.* A selection from it was introduced at a Vocal Society concert on March 14 1836, and was noticed by the critic of The Morning Chronicle, who described it as 'a very grand sacred composition by SPOHR, entitled The Christian's Prayer' and went on to remark: 'It is full of sublime effects, and was as well performed as could be done by an orchestra too limited to do it justice'.[39] It was given again, on a much grander scale, at the Exeter Hall Festival on April 20, where the critic again remarked that 'the effect was sublime'.[40] The Spectator, always appreciative, described the cantata as 'one of Spohr's most finished and perfect productions'.[41] In the Autumn it went the rounds of the provincial festivals, being given at Manchester, Norwich and Liverpool. Curiously, it received more widespread attention from the press on these occasions than it had done in London, and the composition was much more roughly handled. Some reviews were highly critical; The Times in particular employed a correspondent in Manchester who was totally out of sympathy with Spohr's style and who could not find a good word to say for either The Christian's Prayer or The Last Judgement. Of the former he remarked that the singers

> exerted themselves to the utmost, but all their talent failed to relieve the dullness of the composition. The whole piece is, in fact, of so level a character, that the most accomplished performers will ever fail in their endeavours to render it popular.

His opinion of the latter was almost identical, for he commented:

> The composition was not relished by the audience, and we marvel not at it...such is its native dullness that no union of abilities, however, great, could render it interesting.[42]

It seems from his remarks that Spohr was not well received by the inhabitants of Manchester, but such a reception for The Last Judgement at this date would appear to have been exceptional; when given at Worcester two weeks later The

* Vater Unser, composed in 1829, is a setting of a text by Mahlmann. In England it was published under the title The Christian's Prayer, but was sometimes referred to by its original title and even on one occasion as Pater Unser.

Times simply observed that it was 'now too well known and too generally admired to render necessary any detailed analysis of its merits'.[43] Perhaps the Manchester critic was to some extent projecting his own attitudes onto the audience; certainly no other critic felt it necessary to note that the oratorio had been coolly received. The Morning Chronicle was gentler in its review of The Christian's Prayer than The Times, but it too raised many objections to the work which were based principally on the unsuitability of the style of the music for such a text. It conceded that the cantata was 'very magnificent certainly, but too pompous and imposing to accord with the simplicity and lowliness of that divine petition',[44] and followed this up with a detailed amplification of its reservations.

The objections raised by The Times and The Morning Chronicle induced The Musical World to put its own position on record, attempting to steer a middle course between the too severe tone of some and the complacent adulation of others, saying:

> We cannot proceed to the length of some of our contemporaries, in rejecting Spohr's musical illustration of the Lord's Prayer. We cannot, with the Times, feel it to be monotonous and wearisome; or with the judicious writer in the Chronicle, that it is "deficient in melody." That it wants "simplicity (of treatment) and repose," in all the movements, we yield to that unprejudiced critic; while we fully accord with him in questioning the poetical discrimination of the composer, surcharging the lowliness and simple strain of that petition "with the fortissimo roar of many voices, the thunder of drums and the brazen clang of trombones and trumpets. "All this fierce colouring is scarcely in keeping with the prevailing sentiment of the subject. "Spohr is a great man;" to recur again to the opinion of the critic just quoted; "but few men are so great that they cannot be overrated, and assuredly Spohr is not one of them."... We unwillingly read these detractions; yet we repose with confidence upon the judgement both of the writer in the Chronicle and the reviewer of "The Last Hours of the Saviour"...in...the Musical World, because we believe them to be men superior to the weakness of a headlong prejudice and that they are swayed only by a singleness of purpose, to advance what they feel to be the consummation of the true as well as well as the beautiful in art.[45]

The criticism here seems concerned mostly with the suitability of the music to the text rather than the quality of the music itself, taken in isolation;

but the reference to the review of The Last Hours of the Saviour (Des Heilands letzte Stunden) which had been contributed to The Musical World by H.J. Gauntlett, implies that the many perceptive remarks on points of weakness in Spohr's musical style which this review made were accepted as having some validity. Gauntlett's opinions will be examined later, but at this stage the conclusion can be drawn that by the mid-1830's there was beginning to be a much more informed and scholarly approach from musicians who did not wholeheartedly subscribe to what Chorley described as Spohr's 'apotheosis'. On the other hand there is clear evidence that a strong feeling did exist in some quarters that The Christian's Prayer was a work of the first rank. This can be inferred from the comment of the critic of The Morning Chronicle, on its performance at Norwich on September 23, who, though not himself convinced of its greatness, admitted that others were, remarking: 'we may, perhaps, be able to discover the transcendent beauties, which it is said to possess when we are more familiar with it than we are at present'.[46]

One of those who claimed that it possessed transcendent beauties was the critic of The Spectator, for the work was not without its apologists in the press, and he, taking exception to the mauling it had suffered from some of his colleagues, made a strong attack of the lack of vision of people who failed to discover its finer qualities. He remarked at the time of the Norwich performance:

> We have heard of some (must we call them) criticisms on this beautiful composition, as performed at Manchester, which only serve to show that Spohr is a writer very imperfectly understood, as yet, by the English public. He is in advance of us and we must acquire a little more musical knowledge before we can thoroughly enjoy or even appreciate the intellectual riches as well as the musical resources of his mind.[47]

Another point which Spohr's supporters could put forward in answer to those who did not seem able to perceive the great beauty which they believed his music to possess, was that it could not possibly be appreciated as it deserved until performances were efficient enough to do it justice, and their case was undoubtedly a strong one. Holmes had remarked on deficiencies in the

performance of Spohr's music on many occasions during the previous eight years (see Ch. 2) and apparently the situation was not much improved. A writer from Norwich, covering the Festival for The Musical World, made precisely this point, observing of The Christian's Prayer:

> Spohr's composition, with the exception of the last chorus, barely escaped assassination. The trombone players...were most murderous in their execution. Poor Spohr! the critics fancy they are hearing him, and judge accordingly. When the 'Unser Pater' is performed like 'The Heavens are telling' or 'The Hailstone Chorus,' Spohr will no longer be the dull fellow some folks are so ready to imagine him. He must bide his time. Conductors, leaders, and all the subordinate members of an orchestra have yet to do him justice.[48]

At Liverpool, too, it was noted that, on October 5, the cantata was 'got through, but scarcely performed'.[49] There is no doubt that, in general, performances of his music still left much to be desired; the effect of this state of affairs on his popularity, together with further evidence of its extent will be considered in greater detail below.

Many of the same issues that had been raised by The Christian's Prayer came up again over The Crucifixion (Des Heilands letzte Stunden)* which was first performed at the Vocal Concerts on March 27 1837. Previews of the work, based on perusal of the printed score made similar criticisms to those levelled at the cantata, an example being the review of Edward Taylor's edition of the oratorio in The Analyst where objections were tempered with qualified admiration, it commented:

> Spohr's genius is not fitted for the oratorio: it is wanting in the power, the dignity, the nerve, so remarkably characteristic of the sacred works of Handel, Bach, Graun and Beethoven. While listening to The Last Judgement, or The Crucifixion, you admire but do not venerate...although this oratorio, as such, is a failure, yet there are points of it, which, if not brought up to this standard /i.e. of Handel's Messiah and Bach's Passion/ but judged by their intrinsic merits as music, must we think, exort praise from the most censorious....[50]

Despite these reservations and those expressed by Gauntlett in his critical review of the work, the reactions of those members of the press who covered its first performance was uniformly enthusiastic: the impression which it obviously

* For the 1839 Norwich festival the oratorio's English title was changed again to Calvary, by which name it was henceforth known.

made in performance was such as to silence criticism. The Morning Chronicle commented:

> The music never loses the exalted quality which belongs to its sacred character, nor makes us forget the divine majesty of its subject. While it thus preserves its ecclesiastical grandeur and solemnity, it is never stiff, heavy or monotonous. On the contrary, its variety is infinite; and while its sublimity elevates the mind, the ear is ravished by airs and harmonies of enchanting sweetness and beauty.
>
> Such was the impression made upon us by last night's performance, which, though not on a scale of magnitude commensurate with the greatness of the work, was yet sufficient to develop its beauties... We shall take another opportunity of reviewing this great work. At present we can only add that this performance of it produced a strong impression on a numerous and very musical audience. When performed (as it will be) at our great festivals, it will be found not to yield in sublimity of conception, richness of imagination, profound feeling, and command of all the resources of the art, to any existing production of the sacred musical drama.[51]

The Times, too, was rapturous in its appraisal saying at one point:

> We should attempt in vain to describe the etherial character of the harmonies constantly flowing in their magic circle - the graceful and impassioned expression of the melodies, the impress of the holy fervour which marks the whole of the christian portion of the music... For those who possess the oratorio (and we doubt not that few lovers of music will be long without it) we would point out the following pieces for their closest attention... we are much mistaken if this sublime oratorio do not, at the approaching festivals, command a first place in the attention of the public already prepared for the enjoyment of it by 'The Last Judgement'.[52]

In view of such sanguine hopes it is perhaps surprising to discover that not only was the oratorio not given at any of the provincial festivals during the succeeding two seasons, but also that even its success at Norwich in 1839 failed to establish it in the repertoire. The reluctance of festivals to perform The Crucifixion was commented on at the time; a critic in The Analyst, for instance, remarked in his notices of the Birmingham Festival of 1838:

> we consider the total neglect of Spohr a by no means venial error of the festival directors. Why should they not have produced the entire Crucifixion, in order

> to give the public an opportunity, for the first time, fairly to judge of and appreciate its undeniably great beauties? The production of such a work would have redounded equally to the credit of the festival and to the gratification of the public.[53]

The main reason why it was largely ignored, however, is quite plain: it was objected to on religious grounds. In 1834 Edward Hodges had published a booklet entitled An Apology for Church Music and Musical Festivals in answer to the animadversions of the Standard and the Record, in which he defended the propriety of illustrating religious themes in music against the attack of those who thought that all such things were redolent of the opera house; but even Hodges, when he came to discuss the suitability of certain subjects for treatment in oratorio, considered that the judgement and death of Christ were doubtful subjects for musical setting.[54] Many even of those churchmen who accepted the principle of oratorio were nevertheless deeply concerned about the style employed for religious music and firmly against those subjects, over which Hodges had expressed doubts, being set to music.

A hint of the opposition which The Crucifixion roused almost immediately is given by a notice to correspondents which appeared in The Musical World; one at least of the writers referred to (judging by his pseudonym) was clearly raising theological questions. The notice read:

> "A minor canon" and "A man with tender ears" have sent us wicked epigrams upon the new oratorio, which was performed last Monday evening. We request our correspondents will accept an apology (upon two grounds) for not inserting their squibs. The first, because we cannot bring ourselves to sanction the smallest slight offered to a noble genius whose productions have "made our hearts burn within us," from admiration and delight; and secondly, from a private motive, not necessary to be explained.[55]

The matter came most prominently to the fore, however, when the oratorio was given at Norwich two years later, under the baton of the composer. On the Sunday previous to the performance, when Spohr attended a service in the cathedral, 'a zealous clergyman considered it his duty to hurl a crushing discourse against the oratorio... and at the conclusion implored his hearers not to surrender their souls for one day's pleasure, but to stop away from its performance'.[56] Such a manifestation of clerical intolerance did not go unchallenged and it is clear from the huge number of people who

crowded in to hear the work that the preacher's appeal went largely unheeded. A writer in The Monthly Chronicle described the scene in the cathedral in such a way as to leave no doubt where his sympathies lay, saying:

> We now see the fanatical zealot in the pulpit, and sitting right opposite to him the great composer, with ears happily deaf to the English tongue; but with a demeanour so becoming, with look so full of pure good will, and with so much humility and mildness in the features, that his countenance alone spoke to the heart like a good sermon. Without intending it, we make a comparison, and cannot for a moment doubt in which of the two dwelt the spirit of religion, which denoted the true christian![57]

In fact, there seems to have been little open support for the extreme clerical view, but in spite of this the matter was considered serious enough to warrant it a prominent place in press accounts of the festival. The Morning Chronicle's correspondent mentioned it in all his reports. In the first of these he commented indignantly that Spohr had been 'personally apostrophised' by the preacher, and went on to say:

> There is nothing uncommon in sermons against musical festivals being preached on the eve of their commencement; but the singularity in the present instance was, that the sermon was preached in the cathedral, and before the Bishop of Norwich, who (along with many other clergymen) is one of the vice-presidents of the festival.[58]

His remarks indicate that the clergy themselves were sharply divided over the issue but that there was a vociferous party within the church which held intransigent views on the question of the musical treatment of religious subjects. The following day the critic expressed the fear that religious scruples might keep people away from the performance, but in his next despatch was able to report that this fear had been unfounded, and asserted that 'unquestionably the feelings of the most pious Christian, instead of being shocked, must have been elevated and strengthened by listening to this most sublime production'.[59]

The Times, too, adverted to the matter, saying:

> We were surprised to learn that the intended performance of this oratorio had been made the subject of attack from

> a certain religious party. The propriety of rendering music the handmaid of devotion, or of enlisting the arts in the service of religion, is a question which every individual must answer for himself; nor are we at all disposed to question the motives of those who think such an association improper. But to censure this oratorio as a novel attempt of its kind is altogether mistaken. The fact is, that more oratorios have been written on the life, sufferings, death, and exaltation of the Messiah than on any subject whatever, most of which have been performed entire, or in part, at various festivals in this country, and generally in cathedrals or churches.[60]

What the critic maintained may have been broadly true up to the 1830's, but the influence of religious feelings on this issue can be judged from the fact that it was felt necessary to publish an edition of Beethoven's Mount of Olives giving it an entirely different story.*

In the long run religious objections proved remarkably strong in limiting the number of public performances which Spohr's Calvary received. In 1847, for instance, during Spohr's visit, it was planned to give all his oratorios and cantatas at Exeter Hall but the opposition of the clergy led to The Fall of Babylon being given for a second time in place of Calvary. Not until 1852 did the oratorio receive a second performance in London, and its only performance at a provincial festival during Spohr's lifetime, other than at Norwich, was at Hereford in 1849, where, however, only five numbers were given. On that occasion The Musical World remarked:

> The execution was irreproachable, but it was a great error to have given so small a portion of a work which there is so general a curiosity to hear entire, and on the strength of the composer's name alone, might have been made the grand feature of the festival.[61]

The force of the sort of attitude which hindered performances of Calvary diminished later in the century, but by that time the decline in Spohr's reputation was so far under way that this had little effect on the popularity of the oratorio.

In relation to the state of Spohr's standing as a composer during the

* Engedi or David in the Wilderness.

1830's, however, theological controversy played a relatively minor part; neither before nor after the production of Des Heilands letzte Stunden could it be said to have had any appreciable effect on his reputation. The wide range of opinions on the merits of his works which were current at that time were largely based on musical criteria, though these in turn were clearly influenced by general views on the nature and functions of art. With hindsight it is possible to see that, on balance, fundamental developments in taste were likely to favour Spohr's popularity; but in the short term it must have seemed to many observers in the late 1830's that his popularity had reached a peak and was already in decline. This view is illustrated by a paragraph in The Analyst's review of the Norwich festival, where it was observed:

> It is not correct, as was stated in one of the articles in the morning papers, preparatory to the performance at Norwich, that from the time of his first oratorio being performed in this country, the reputation of the author has been "steadily increasing". For a few years after that event, and at the time of the production of the "Azor and Zemira," some interest was excited in favour of the Spohr school of music, and a few imitators were found among our native composers: but at no time could the progenitor of it have been denominated a popular composer, not do we believe... that he ever will be so. He will continue to be the idol of the instrumentalist and the amateur quartett player; but so long as a taste exists in favour of the simple and severe style in oratorio writing, the oratorios of Spohr will be resorted to at intervals only for public performance.[62]

Events show that this reading of the situation was not wholly justified, (in fact it was maintained by Gauntlett that: 'Spohr's reputation has been for some time past... "Stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current "')[63] but considering the vociferousness of Spohr's critics at this time it is not surprising that it should have been entertained.

A correspondent to The Musical World, responding to the news of Spohr's impending visit to Norwich, commented in terms which suggest that he was reflecting a widely prevalent point of view:

> I perceive...that Spohr is to come over for the purpose of presiding at his own oratorio. Poor

> fellow! they will make a great stalking-horse of him. He should have come here ten years ago, when his music was, to a certain extent, popular. His constant repetitions of himself in his later publications have made the public lukewarm, if not indifferent to his real merits.[64]

Whether it could be fairly said that the public at large had ever been more than indifferent to Spohr's merits at this stage, is a moot point: Gauntlett observed:

> we feel that this composer's works have not met with that share of public attention which they so richly merit. That the characteristics of his writings are but dimly and imperfectly known to the multitude, we are readily prepared to admit: we even go farther, and hesitate not to affirm that but few (an isolated band) of members of the profession, have carefully analized his style; and if so, how can it be expected that it should be communicated, made intelligible, or put into practice, by the generality of musical amateurs?[65]

Spohr's strength lay in the admiration of a few professional musicians and serious amateurs, and it was towards these that attacks on his achievements were generally being directed by hostile critics. This is shown in the following passage in a review of the cantata God Thou art Great, which concluded:

> Louis Spohr has taken up his real position in Germany amongst living composers; he has been injudiciously exalted in England, but every new production of his pen assists the artist and the amateur in forming a right opinion of the extent of his genius and acquirements. He has the mechanism but not the poetical temperament; if he could have united these qualities of art and nature, he would be not only the greatest musician living, but the greatest that ever lived. As it is he is certainly inferior to such men as Cherubini and Mendelssohn; men by no means accustomed to walk up and down a very small room habited in a straight waistcoat.[66]

There is nothing new in the grounds upon which the critic based his objections, but the way in which he phrased them implies that he at least thought their validity was being accepted by those who had previously been inclined to exalt Spohr injudiciously. By concurring in their admiration for Spohr's technique but questioning his inspiration he managed simultaneously to impugn both Spohr and those (by implication, pedantic) musicians who persisted in admiring

him. (The reference to Mendelssohn raises the question of how far his rapidly growing popularity affected Spohr's, and this will be dealt with in due course.)

Sometimes critics were more pointed in their references to the pro-Spohr party and in the process of exposing his weaknesses clearly revealed that he could still count upon very staunch support from his partisans. Thus in 1837, following unenthusiastic comments on The Crucifixion, The Atlas included a condemnation of Spohr's work in an article entitled 'Composition by Machinery'. (Though the critic did not mention Spohr by name, there is no doubt about the identity of his victim.) As in the previously quoted extract, not only Spohr, but also his supporters were clearly being held up to critical scrutiny. He wrote:

> A great German, whom it is not necessary to name, since it would disturb the complacency of some, in whose ears it would be treason to whisper ought but what related to a genius of the first rate, owes his greatness to the knowledge that B flat may turn into A sharp; that a dominant seventh may resolve as an extreme sharp sixth etc., etc. Feasts of the chromatic has this composer served up to us, double sharps by bushels, and daintily has be set off his melodies and furbished them by means of chromatic fillings up of the harmony in the inner parts; but all this cayenne and spice, good Maestro, will not do for the simplicity of pure invention, nor will it pass with posterity as musical thought.[67]

Disagreement, therefore, was rife. Examples of extreme views on both sides could be multiplied vastly, and it seems almost as though it was impossible for anyone to hold a moderate opinion about Spohr. His supporters were virtually uncritical in their adulation; his opponents were generally propelled into a position of implacable condemnation.

These entrenched attitudes, however, were not wholly in response to the music itself. Individual rivalries among musical journalists and struggles for influence within the musical world played their part in determining such extreme opinions. Only a few of the personalities involved in these feuds can be identified with any certainty,* and since their squabbles involved far more than an attitude towards Spohr, they were often strange bedfellows in

* See the list of newspapers and periodicals below p.379ff

their like or dislike of his music. Davidson, for instance, (who was pro-Spohr) had referred to both the critic of The Atlas (who was increasingly cool towards Spohr) and Taylor (who was strongly pro Spohr) in a letter written to The Musical Magazine under the pseudonym Arthur Pendragon, as 'the sapient writers of musical nonsense for the "Atlas" and "Spectator"', and added in a footnote: 'I have a few words to address to you Mr. Editor, in a future letter, concerning the impertinence and arrogance of these flippant scribblers'.[68]* In this case Spohr was not involved, but in other instances it is clear that journalists were quite happy to use him as an excuse for venting their spleen at one another. An example of this is furnished by the uncomplimentary leading article on The Last Judgement, which appeared in The Musical World in 1838, in which the blame for the growing tendency to depreciate Spohr's achievement was laid squarely on the shoulders of a party with which the writer was at loggerheads. It began:

> The extravagant encomiums lavished by interested critics on such of the writings of Louis Spohr as had been adapted for the English market, tended to alienate the affections of more moderate and clear-sighted persons from the real merits of this learned and elaborate writer. The everlasting drivel of their commendation continued to drip, drip, drip until one felt tempted to withold the fair tribute of admiration due to the ingenious, rather than creative, mind of the author; in order to be at variance with persons incapable of forming a just estimate of his talents even if they had been free from the bias of sordid motives.
>
> Great allowance must be made for difference in natural taste, when an attempt is made to reconcile the conflicting opinions with which works of the same composer are frequently regarded... It is not from the class of individuals who honestly entertain these discrepancies of sentiment, that the choral music of Louis Spohr has fallen "into the sear and yellow leaf;" but the decayed estimation in which it is at present held by a large portion of our musical amateurs, has unquestionably arisen from the anxious puffing of overweening conceit and selfish avarice.[69]

The implication contained in the article is that the party in support of Spohr (in the eyes of its opponents) was using him as a vehicle for the furtherance of its own ambitions, while those who denigrated his work did so (in their own

* Unfortunately no other letter can be traced - perhaps it was too strong, even for The Musical Magazine.

eyes) in the disinterested spirit of true criticism; but since many of Spohr's most ardent admirers and advocates occupied prestigious positions and had been materially successful, whether through merit or influence, there was doubtless a considerable element of professional jealousy involved in the controversy.

Much the same conclusion can be drawn from the comments of another writer which showed that he shared the opinion of the author of the previous extract; he referred to the performance of Calvary at Norwich, saying:

> The oratorio and, indeed, the whole festival performance, was got up with feverish zeal and assiduity. For weeks before the event, the whole stream of paragraphing, and announcing, and puffing, was laid on from the main, and the steam-press pumps were kept constantly going; not judiciously, however, for they were overworked; and thus the main-spring and intention of the whole machinery became apparent to the most obtuse intellectual vision.[70]

The intention may have been obvious to the writer of this piece, but whether or not it was divined by the majority of people who read the 'puffs' of which he complained, is another matter. Evidence of public reaction to Spohr's visit to Norwich would seem to indicate that it was not.

The complicated interaction of conflicting personalities in the journalistic world is a subject in its own right. To what extent it had any long term influence on Spohr's reputation is highly debatable, but there can be no doubt that the growth of musical journalism in the 1830's played a significant part in the formation of opinion about Spohr. Whether the press as a whole moulds or merely reflects public opinion, or whether it does both partially, is likely to continue to be the subject of an unresolved argument among historians and sociologists: that its influence is considerable, however, if only as an agent for the rapid dissemination of ideas, has long been maintained by members of the press themselves; and this view is presumably shared by governments which frequently seek to muzzle it. In 1834 Lord Lyndhurst referring to the editor of The Times, exclaimed: 'Why, Barnes is the most powerful man in the country'.[71] But this power could only be achieved

and retained by somewhat circumspect means; as The Sheffield Iris explained it: 'Newspapers are first and foremost what public opinion makes them; then by a peculiar reaction they make public opinion what they please, so long as they lead with discretion, and seem to follow while in reality they lead'.[72] Nevertheless, many journalists were in no doubt about the very real influence which they believed they could wield in the field of taste as well as politics and one writer remarked, though with little regard for historical accuracy, that the past four centuries had shown that:

> The press possesses a power, when honestly and ably exerted, to exalt, and, when abused, to degrade and subvert, whatever it steadily advocates or denounces. Almost all the gradual changes in that period, which have produced an improvement of manners and customs in England and on the continent of Europe, have been either wholly wrought, or mainly assisted by its influence.[73]

The 1830's witnessed an uprecedented explosion in the quantity of specialised periodical literature. A gradual increase in the number of periodicals is observable during the previous two decades, and this accelerated greatly in the 1830's and 1840's. Many of the new publications had only a short existence, but there is no denying the vitality of the press: for every journal that failed it must have seemed as though, like the Hydra's heads, two more sprang up in its place. With respect to music it was not only the specifically musical periodicals which are important; indeed, few of these survived for long. A continuous thread is provided by The Harmonicon and its successor The Monthly Supplement to the Musical Library which lasted until 1836, and by The Musical World which lasted from 1836 to 1891, but until the mid 1840's these were only briefly joined by such publications as The Monthly Musical and Literary Journal (1830), The Musical Magazine (1835), The Musical Examiner (1842-44) and The Musical Herald (1846-7), while no more than references can now be found to magazines such as Baker's Quarterly Musical Journal (1836?) and The Musician (1838?)* In fact, the most notable expansion came with the proliferation of musical

* For refs. to these see Analyst vi(1836), 46 & Mus. World ix(1838), 251.

sections in non-musical journals. By the end of the 1830's the unlikeliest periodicals had instituted a regular musical column, many of which approached the matter with seriousness and some pretension to authority. In 1830 the short-lived Monthly Musical and Literary Journal had opened its first issue with the observation:

> There is, perhaps, no science or accomplishment now so much cultivated in this country as that of music; in fact, it has become a necessary part of the acquirements of every well-informed person... Yet there is, perhaps, no art that possesses so few critical and literary advocates. If we except the Quarterly Musical Review and the Harmonicon, it will be difficult to discover a periodical publication that devotes any considerable portion of its columns to the literature of music or the advancement of the art; and even in the daily journals, where notices of musical performances are admitted, the critiques are too often evidently written by persons totally unacquainted with either the theoretical or practical part of harmony.[74]

But by 1838 The Analyst could maintain:

> there is scarcely a periodical work throughout the kingdom that does not devote a portion of its columns to musical intelligence of the ordinary popular class, while many of them, more especially dedicated to a science or an art, nevertheless contain opinions (and frequently judicious ones) upon musical performances, while some assert their pretensions in the science of counterpoint. Even The Gardener's Gazette has its musical editor, who speaks "with authority and not as a scrub," upon consecutive fifths and inconsequent resolutions.[75]

Some indication of the numbers of musical journalists involved can be derived from the 259 free tickets issued to the press for the four days of the Amateur Musical Festival in 1835.[76]

These developments were a product of the wider intellectual changes which were taking place with increasing rapidity during the second quarter of the century; changes which in some respect were materially to assist the growth of Spohr's reputation, and since these were integral to the evolution of musical taste it will be useful to characterise them briefly.

Economic factors were, as is invariably the case, at the root of the political, social and intellectual upheavals which transformed English life in the first half of the nineteenth century. The political alliance between

the landowning gentry and the commercial middle class had been sealed by the parliamentary reforms of 1832, which were not in any real sense democratic, but rather a recognition of the increasingly powerful economic position which the middle class had come to occupy. One result of this was a rapid widening of the gulf between them and the urban poor, and a fear which united all sections of the middle and upper classes was of disruption from below; both were agreed that the supreme threat to stability came from the labouring classes and that in great measure the growth of literacy was to blame. Many may have feared with Lord Eldon that 'the march of intellect' would become 'a tune to which one day or the other a hundred thousand tall fellows with clubs and pikes will march against Whitehall'.[77] On the other hand a substantial number of influential people were convinced that the solution lay not in suppressing education but in directing it along the right lines; and this view was to become the dominant one during Victoria's reign, colouring all areas of intellectual and artistic life.

The evangelicals had been first in the educational field as early as the 1790's and were to continue as an important force. Next came the utilitarians, and in 1826 was founded the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, its publications being directed at the skilled working man, the same public for which the Mechanics Institutes were then being founded (though in the long run they tended to be taken over by the middle class in whome the thirst for knowledge most strongly took root). The aims of all these enterprises, whether presented under a secular or religious guise, were to induce moral improvement and produce responsible citizens, thus ensuring the stability of society. With respect to music, the idea that knowledge would transform a gross sensual enjoyment into something of real benefit to the mind is illustrated by the following passage which appeared in The New Monthly Magazine in 1835. The writer believed that;

> Music as a science is appreciated in its results in proportion to the degree of knowledge of the means by which these are produced. Melody appeals to the mind through the senses; but in proportion as the sense of the

> the hearer is sharpened by exercise, and enlightened by knowledge and reflection, is the sensual delight refined.[78]

The arts in general were felt by many to be a means of civilising the masses and were not neglected by these institutions, nor, as has been indicated, by the periodical press whose expansion was also largely in response to the demand for knowledge. This attitude was expressed by an optimistic writer, appealing for the lowering of prices at the Three Choirs' Festivals, who wrote:

> he must be unobservant indeed who cannot perceive that a finer tone of civility has been of late years pervading the deportment of our "hewers of wood," and we believe that as, in proportion to their mental culture, men more accurately estimate their own position in society, and are prepared to render justice to that of their superiors...so we believe that effectually to maintain that distinction, the "lower orders" should be courteously admitted to all public institutions, and above all to those great associations whose object and tendency are to refine the feelings and soften the character.[79]

The Times similarly remarked of the Norwich Festival that 'it is not the least advantage of such a meeting that it opens to so large a number of artisans, of men who live by bodily toil, a week of such refined enjoyment'.[80] That this sort of refined enjoyment was morally beneficial, particularly in the case of oratorio, is a view which undoubtedly was widely held at this time. This is further illustrated in The Musical World's comment on the Sacred Harmonic Society, which it claimed was: 'exercising a high moral influence on the community, and in every way tending to ameliorate the manners of the age'.[81]

Unquestionably the press was a powerful agent in the dissemination of ideas, and so far as music is concerned the weight of its authority was increasingly coming to reflect the general concern for seriousness of purpose. The ascendancy of a middle-class outlook which stressed respect for professionalism and which was altogether more earnestly introspective than the aristocratic outlook it had gradually been displacing, affected ideas on music as much as on the other arts and on morality. However much, in

practice, the majority continued to favour light and undemanding music, it increasingly came to be accepted in principle that music should provide more than merely superficial gratification. The attitude, widely prevalent and respectable prior to 1830, that music was little more than a social ornament, was rapidly becoming disreputable.

A striking example of this, and of the role which the press performed in effecting it, is given by the reports in The Times on the Worcester Festival of 1836. Among the country gentry, who formed the bulk of the patrons of the festival, older traditions of concert-going still persisted strongly; the critic commented with affronted astonishment that the audience talked loudly during the performance and began leaving before the end. But it was not only for their lack of manners that he castigated them, for he also drew attention, witheringly, to their lack of appreciation of good music, remarking of Spohr's 'Night's Lingering Shades':

> The Trio from Azor and Zemira was given with great correctness and sweetness; but it was not much relished by the audience to whom a comic duet between Phillips and Braham, and "Jock of Hazledean," were infinitely more acceptable.[82]

(This also provides another example of the view that Spohr's music was particularly to be identified with ideals of good taste, as does The Times' comment the following year that the Vocal Society had 'stamped its character for high taste and sound judgement by its production of Spohr's last oratorio, The Crucifixion'.[83]) Each of The Times critic's reports from the 1836 Worcester festival were full of similar remarks, and in his last one he wrote:

> It is worthy of record as a document for the musical historian of future times, that in the year 1836, in a provincial town, the finest instrumental players in the kingdom, in number 64, sate still throughout the entire act of a concert listening to"The auld wife", "I'm over young to marry yet," "She wore a wreath of roses," and "John Anderson my Jo," sung by Phillips, Cardon, Mrs Knyvett and Braham.[84]

Such a rebuke from the all powerful Times could not have failed to have some effect.

The expression of similar opinions in the press was to be found with

increasing frequency as the decade advances and as more and more writers became concerned about an all round improvement of standards. Edward Holmes had been one of the first consistently to maintain this position, as has been shown by extracts already quoted (ch. 2 & 3), but he soon had many allies. In 1834 a contributor to The Analyst, signing himself Y.D., wrote:

> A person tolerably conversant with musical science, if he have mixed much in society, must be aware of the ignorance and presumption which may be said almost universally to prevail on the subject; in fact, it is scarcely hazarding too much to affirm that a larger portion of nonsense is uttered in conversation respecting music than on any other topic. In proof of this assertion, I have myself repeatedly heard Mozard called heavy, Haydn dull, Rossini sublime, Beethoven's Fidelio very mediocre, Bellini's Puritani the most beautiful music in the world; in short I have been doomed to hear nearly all the great composers abused, while the inferior were lauded to the skies.[85]

It was on this state of affairs that the writer blamed the deficiencies of music in London, asserting that they 'may fairly be attributed to the inferior amount of musical knowledge possessed by the English public'.[86] Another contributor to the same magazine commented on the inability of the majority to form an intelligent judgement about music, but observed that this could not be remedied merely by bluntly confronting them with what the cognoscenti understood to be good music. He remarked:

> Place a fugue of Sebastian Bach, a symphony of Beethoven or an opera of Spohr, before one whose acquaintance with the art (if it be worthy the name) has been limited to Bellini and Herz, and it is more than probable that he will contract a lasting distaste for scientific music.[87]

This was exactly what Holmes had feared in 1831 when the Philharmonic Society included three works by Spohr in a single programme. Holmes, Mozart's first English biographer, would undoubtedly have approved of the solution suggested by the writer in The Analyst, who proposed that:

> An opportunity of contrasting the gold of Mozart with the dross of modern Italian scribblers would effectually disperse the clouds of ignorance and banish at once the frivolous and bad taste. Such an opportunity would, in all probability, prove effectual in producing a reconciliation between the two parties who now divide the musical world. The

> first of these parties consists of exclusive admirers of mere science and artificial contrivance; the second is composed of advocates for the popular and easy of comprehension. The favourite (contemporary) composers of the former are Spohr and Mendelssohn - of the latter Rossini, Auber and Strauss. The music of Mozart, although eminently scientific, is yet capable of being appreciated by the most uncultivated lover of sweet sounds: it is, consequently, beyond any other, calculated to controvert the unfounded, though widely spread, opinion that science excludes or is opposed to whatever pleases the ear; it, in fact, rather demonstrates the converse proposition, viz., that it is only through the medium of science that the art is rendered capable of imparting the highest and most permanent gratifications.[88]

By the end of the decade the progress of taste seemed to be such that it could be said, though perhaps with more wishfulness than accuracy, that:

> Both as a science and an art, music has, within the last quarter of a century acquired such an ascendancy in the list of accomplishments requisite to complete an Englishman's education, that we no longer hear the study of it treated as an elegant frivolity by the practical or moral philosopher; or as a pleasing dextrous attainment, proper to while away a listless hour, by the possessor of aristocratic leisure: or lastly, as an enervating and engrossing, and therefore dangerous, relaxation, by the man of mercantile pleasure: which last section of the British community, by the way, at the moment of denouncing the fascination of a social concert, could, with an edifying inconsistency of action devote whole nights of every week to a whist club.[89]

The rise of Spohr's reputation was closely linked to this movement. Thus, just as the 1830's were a decisive stage in the transformation of social and intellectual attitudes, marked by contradictions and the trenchant expression of disparate opinions, so the history of Spohr's fortunes at that time is similarly characterised; for not all critics were committed to the highly serious view of art taken by some of their colleagues. Entrenched attitudes could not change overnight, and however strongly the tide of opinion may have been running in favour of those who believed in the vital moral function of art, there were important cross currents which continued to cause reactionary eddies.

According to the old scale of values, whose essence is implied in the quotation given above, (ref. 89). Spohr's music was undoubtedly unfashionable.

For years it had been confined to the Philharmonic Society, the Societa Armonica and other concerts frequented by 'professors of music, their connections and the amateurs of less distinguished rank'.[90] Here a considerable proportion of the audience expected their music to be serious, but these represented a small section of the concert-going public as a whole in the early 1830's. Many critics, as yet hardly affected by the idea of high Art, still inclined to side with the majority who found such music as Spohr's to be too scientific. From the point of view of the average amateur performer, not only was it too heavy, but also too technically demanding: to the critics who shared the prejudices of their fashionable readers, the complexities of harmony and closely wrought textures of his works seemed little more than mere academicism. Consequently, criticisms of technical difficulties in Spohr's music, which it was felt would render it inaccessible to the majority of amateurs, were prominent in reviews of the 1820's and continued to be voiced for some time after 1830. Even critics who were not disposed to deny him some measure of eminence often took exception to this aspect of his work. In 1828, for instance, The Harmonicon had complained about his use of unusual keys and time signatures, apparently deeming them to have no serious musical function. Reviewing Novello's arrangement of 'Select Airs from Spohr's Opera of Faust' the critic remarked that it was

> very censurable in such a composer as Mr Spohr, who can plead no temptation for descending to artifices that may, in the eyes of the ignorant, give short-lived importance to quackery and dullness, but which must always prove offensive to rational minds.[91]

Even in its otherwise enthusiastic review of The Last Judgement, The Harmonicon had objected to Spohr's use of the key of G flat, pointing out that 'his passion is for such extraneous modes' and adding:

> Such pedantry - for sheer pedantry it is - carries certain punishment along with it, because few, except expert professors, are au fait in keys of so extreme a kind, and, consequently, numbers who might have become admirers of the work, thrust it aside, either in dismay or disgust, when they find such a cloud of sharps and flats at the clef, and so many double ones - evils which must necessarily follow - in every staff.[92]

Some of those who disapproved of these features in Spohr's music, cynically regarded them as being one of the causes of his undeniable popularity among professional musicians revelling in arcane practices which mystified the uninitiated. This view is illustrated by a letter to The Harmonicon in which, while seeking to explain why Beethoven and Spohr escaped the general denigration of contemporary composers, the correspondent took the opportunity to decry both Spohr and the leading members of the musical profession. He claimed that Spohr was admired simply because he possessed 'much learning and a moderate portion of genius, and is not likely, therefore, to interfere with the solemn stupidity of our musical magnificos'.[93]

On the other hand, a writer in The New Monthly Magazine blamed the 'professors' for a lack of appreciation of Spohr among the public, calling them 'the most bigotted set of men that ever obstructed the advance of art', and saying:

> it is only now that the works of Beethoven and Spohr are beginning to be listened to and appreciated. But who were to blame for this? The public? No; they could only listen to what was played to them, and understand what was taught them.[94]

As the climate of opinion changed the force of criticisms which were based on the inability of the dilettanti to master the demands of the music was weakened. It was felt increasingly that the amateur should take his music seriously enough to learn to understand and execute what were, after all, legitimate technical devices. Not surprisingly, one of the earliest musical journalists to have adopted this attitude was Holmes, who in his own reviews made no concessions to technical ignorance among his readers. He freely used such expressions as 'abounding in the flat $\frac{9}{7}$ (Mozart's Harmony)' and 'The musical reader will not fail to notice the exquisite use of the $\frac{6}{4}$ in our extract.'[95] In anticipation of The Harmonicon's objections to Spohr's Last Judgement (above) he remarked:

> except in the choice of some rather unusual keys, there is nothing but what a few rehearsals would render perfectly intelligible. The sooner chorus singers, and the people of orchestras, become used

> to remote keys the better... A few preludes of Bach, well studied, would render all keys alike to the reader.[96]

The disappearance, by the end of the decade, of the sort of criticisms which Holmes was here answering indicates that by then it was not considered respectable any more to express such opinions in print. There is no evidence that these objections ceased to be voiced because amateurs had dramatically improved in their abilities over this period; on the contrary, it was generally accepted that levels of musicianship among the public remained deplorably low: the difference was that this was no longer a state of affairs to be accepted and pandered to, but to be remedied.

A similar change is observable in the case of the closely related charge, which had constantly been levelled at Spohr's music in the previous decade, that his works were 'too laboured and scientific'. This also was based on the assumption, strongly challenged in the 1830's, that music should not unduly tax the mind of the listener or put too much of a strain on his emotions. The prevalence of such observations in reviews already quoted can leave no doubt of their pervasiveness in the early years of the decade. Opponents of 'scientific' music continued to make their views felt in the press well into the 1830's, though with increasing circumpsection; but more seriously damaging to Spohr's reputation where the criticisms of writers whose sympathies lay with German music. In seeking to expose Spohr's weaknesses on every possible occasion these critics were probably motivated by a desire to counter what they saw as Spohr's injudicious idolisation by musicians with more enthusiasm than judgement. Some may perhaps have thought that the admiration of professional musicians arose simply from 'solemn stupidity', but the majority of critics could not have failed to be aware that, especially among younger musicians, it derived from much more active feelings.

There is ample evidence to suggest a very high level of enthusiasm among young English composers, and the influence of Spohr's style on their works will be examined in a later chapter, but it is worth noting at this point that

a large number of reviews of new compositions in the 1830's draw attention to 'Spohrishness' in them. Documentary confirmation of the force and extent of Spohr's impact at that time is also provided by accounts written at a later period by musicians who had once felt its full weight. G.A. Macfarren's reference to the 'almost madness among musicians' which Spohr had induced when Macfarren was a young man has already been mentioned (p.50 above): elsewhere he referred specifically to the influence of his oratorios, saying, 'they were so largely imitated by contemporaries that they may be said to have opened an epoch which, however, was early closed'.[97] In his biography of Macfarren, H.J. Banister also remarked that 'there was during the early years of Macfarren's career, a Spohr "craze" among the younger musicians'.[98] These observations can be further corroborated by a review in The Musical World in 1858 of a performance of extracts from Azor and Zemira; it remarked that this was an opera which 'when produced at Covent Garden some 25 years since turned the heads of all our most enthusiastic musicians'.[99] But perhaps the most explicit account was given in The Musical World in 1854 at a time when Spohr's reputation was again under attack. The writer, almost certainly J.W. Davison, commented:

> Not many years ago the bias was quite the other way. The musical mind of Germany, and of all the followers of the German school, was thoroughly imbued with Spohr. Their light was but a reflexion of his light, their ideas were the natural offspring of his, their forms but imitations of his own. He had pointed out a high road to excellence in which the rest endeavoured to walk; he had invented a new style with whose attractions the others were intoxicated. From one well alone was drawn the German inspiration; and that well was Spohr's. Even the critics were as mad on one side, as now they are mad on the opposite. Mozart and Beethoven were on the point of being deposed and Spohr was to reign in their stead. No composer was more idolised, emulated, and pillaged; the young musicians regarded him as a prophet; his method of harmony was lauded to the skies, and his knowledge of orchestral combinations pronounced unparallelled.[100]

From the general tone of the article it is clear that the writer was largely recalling his personal experience; Davison's own private letters from the early 1830's[101] and letters published in The Musical Magazine in 1835 under the pseudonym Arthur Pendragon[102] certainly demonstrate that he was one of the

young musicians who were captivated at that time. The language of this account, as was characteristic of Davison, suggests overstatement; but, with the exception of the remark about the attitude of the critics (which seems more applicable to the early 1840's) it is substantially in agreement with the other evidence of Spohr's impact on musicians in the early 1830's. Indeed, the vividness with which he recalled the reactions of some twenty years earlier indicates their force. The extent to which Spohr's style was regarded in influential musical circles as the most important element in contemporary music is confirmed by many remarks in reviews of the 1830's; as, for instance, when the critic of The Morning Chronicle commented in a review of The Christian's Prayer: 'This strepitoso style is the fashion of the day, and it is a sort of musical heresy to call it in question'.[103]

In view of such adulation from musicians it must have seemed to many critics in the 1830's that their duty lay in steering a middle course and, like Chorley in 1840, they might have felt that 'we are disposed to differ from those who, because of the limited scope of Spohr's genius, and his constant self-iterations, sneer, while the rest join his apotheosis'.[104] In the minds of the last mentioned gentlemen there were, of course, no doubts about the position Spohr should occupy in the musical hierarchy; they were the ones, according to The Atlas, 'in whose ears it would be treason to whisper aught but what related to a genius of the first rate':[105] but for everyone else the question of where to place him in relation to his predecessors and contemporaries was a subject of perennial debate.

There was certainly a very general feeling among many critics that Spohr's music could not rank equally with the works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. In 1831 The Harmonicon had unequivocally stated its opinion on the matter, remarking:

> It is necessary for the sake of variety, and to prevent the too frequent recurrence of works of high art, which are, unhappily, very limited in number, to introduce now and then a symphony not standing in the same rank with those of the three great masters: and this will account for the occasional performances of Spohr's in E flat, which is a production of labour not of genius, formed in the school of Mozart: but

> in order to hide the imitation, loaded in every part with notes, which consolidate the whole composition into an unintelligible mass, and as effectually conceal the subject or melody when there is one, as if neither had ever had an existence.[106]

The Harmonicon returned once again to the problem of categorising Spohr in a review of a Philharmonic performance of the Second Symphony in 1832, where, after admitting that the work 'like most of his compositions improves upon acquaintance', the critic commented:

> It is in the nature of elaborate writing to unfold itself slowly, and that Spohr is a very industrious writer no argument is needed to prove. His school is decidedly that of Mozart; but it is difficult to say whether, if his archetype had never lived, his genius, unchecked by the greatness of such a predecessor, unrestrained by the fear of becoming an imitator, would not have placed him at the head of some such school as that which now acknowledges him only as a disciple.[107]

This assignment to Spohr of no more than a dependent position in the musical hierarchy was consistent with the point of view often expressed in The Harmonicon (see Ch. 2). Even Spohr's admirers did not deny his indebtedness to Mozart: Holmes, for instance frequently noted their similarities. On one occasion, in a review of Tu m'abbandonai ingrato, he remarked on 'an inharmonic transition' which was 'clearly the property of Mozart', but added good humouredly that Spohr was 'an accomplished thief and deserves credit for filching good things'.[108] On the whole, however, critics refrained from accusing Spohr of direct plagiarism; even his detractors recognised that his individuality was pronounced enough to absolve him from that sort of charge. Nevertheless, it was commonly maintained that he fell short of the eminent position occupied by his 'archetype'; as the sympathetic reviewer of The Morning Chronicle commented, at the end of a criticism of the duet from Faust: 'SPOHR with all his greatness, is not a MOZART'.[109]

Adverse comparisons of Spohr with his three great predecessors can be found with regularity among the reviews of the mid 1830's. The Morning Chronicle, for one, remarked of a performance of a Double Quartet at the Philharmonic Society that:

> It exhibits wonderful skill and ingenuity, and is full of beautiful details; but it wants breadth and general effect, and by no means made up for the want of the quartet by one of the three great masters of which its introduction deprived us.[110]

A similar remark about Spohr's chamber music was made in The Times two years later, which said:

> The quartet from Spohr, op.29, is one of the best by that composer, whose quartets, however, want variety and originality, and are placed at great disadvantage by the side of Mozart and Beethoven.[111]

Yet again, in a review of the Second Symphony, the writer, after calling it 'a work of great genius', concluded with the observation:

> Still, however, it smells a little of the lamp, and its movements do not appear (in DRYDEN'S phrase) to have been "struck off at a heat" like those of the three great masters of symphony.[112]

And another review of the same concert made very much the same point, commenting:

> This is a fine work, though rendered somewhat heavy in its opening movement, by the pertinacity, - dare we say doggedness? - with which its composer clings to some one favourite idea, working it backwards and forwards, up and down, with infinite skill and contrivance - at the expense, however, of some of the variety and excitement, which make Beethoven's music so admirable and spontaneous in its thousand changes.[113]

H.J. Gauntlett, too, compared him with Beethoven, saying:

> Spohr has certainly not the universality of genius which distinguishes Beethoven; but he possesses more than enough to force the admiration of all who know anything about the science and its wide field of invention.[114]

Holmes made much the same point when Die Weihe der Töne was given its second performance, by the Societa Armonica on April 20 1835, on which occasion he remarked:

> His invention has not the eagle wing of Beethoven's - he neither soars so high nor can sustain so long a flight; but this is a comparison under which a very able composer may still think it no imputation to be considered at a disadvantage.[115]

But with Holmes familiarity seems increasingly to have bred contempt, and two years later he exclaimed in exasperation:

> anyone may take the learned, grandiose, and scientific style for us, who will give in exchange for it the ease of genius. If we could get one Haydn, or half a Mozart, we should be content that the violin players might carry off Spohr and Onslow neck and heels. That eternal enharmonic change in Spohr, and that eternal grandiosity in the adagios of Onslow! We are heartily sick of both.[116]*

To put Spohr on a level with Onslow was certainly a much greater denigration than merely to say that he did not quite reach the standard of Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven.

There are many similar examples of reviews which give Spohr a place somewhat lower than the three great masters, but it is often apparent that he was regarded by a substantial number of people as being only fractionally lower, if at all. An instance of this can be found in a letter to The Morning Chronicle, written at the time of his visit to Norwich, where the writer asserted:

> The greatest living musician is now among us- a genius, inferior only to his exalted countrymen, Handel, Beethoven, and Mozart; as a profound scholar, a finished artist, a grand master of the depth of harmony, the equal, if not the superior, of either of them.[117]

In this it is implied that he is superior to Haydn; a view which was to some extent shared by Davison, who wrote to The Musical Magazine:

> Such vapid, silly nonentities as most of Haydn's early symphonies must be intolerable to any but those of a pedantic and crabbed set of men, whose narrow minds and confined intellects will not allow them to appreciate the beauties of Spohr and Beethoven.[118]

It might also be argued that among others of his deceased compatriots whom he surpassed was Weber. This was certainly Gauntlett's opinion; as is indicated by his verdict, after discussing Spohr's style, that: 'All these characteristics are blended into a unity, in all respects far above the fitful flashes of Carl Maria Weber, and the other operatic writers of his day'.[119]

In fact, if not generally accepted as the equal of his greatest predecessors, Spohr seemed to come so close to them that his name could often be spoken

* Though it is possible that the reviews in The Atlas were no longer by Holmes in 1837.

in the same breath; thus in discussing the progress of instrumental music in England, The Analyst could say:

> Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Spohr have clothed some of their finest conceptions in the sinfonia for a full band, and in the quartet for stringed instruments.[120]

And even more pointedly, in an assessment which was severely critical of some aspects of his work, a 'Musician about town' remarked that:

> After having for many years enjoyed the reputation of being one of the most (if not the most) intellectual violinist and composer for the instrument, of his day, Spohr now enjoys the distinguished honour of being esteemed a first-rate dramatic composer, and an oratorio writer in the same rank with Beethoven.[121]

The situation was that, whatever Spohr's deficiencies, there were few other living composers in the 1830's who could seriously be suggested as his rival in the realms of 'high art'. As early as 1828 a writer in The Harmonicon had stated:

> I have been made very unhappy for many days past, by a report of Spohr's death, which at length I learn is unfounded. Such a man would have been a serious loss at any time, but at the present, irreparable.[122]

Ten years later Hogarth, in his Musical History, Biography, and Criticism, when he came to deal with living musicians placed Spohr first in the list and commented;

> ...As a composer, he was first distinguished by his concertos, quartets, and other instrumental pieces; but he afterwards turned his attention to dramatic, and more recently, to sacred music. By his operas of Faust, Jessonda, and Zemire and Azor, he has raised himself to the highest rank amongst the composers for the theatre; and his oratorios of The Last Judgement and The Crucifixion are not surpassed, in the sublimity of many of their parts, by anything that has appeared since the days of Handel.[123]

By 1839, it could be averred in The Morning Chronicle that, as a composer, 'the consenting voice of his most accomplished contemporaries has placed him at their head'.[124] Certainly there were numerous of his contemporaries who could not begin to be compared with him. For instance, one critic, reviewing Spohr's 'Cradle song', remarked: 'Compare this little gem with the Sleep on of Neukomm, and you will readily perceive the difference between the real musician and the charlatan',[125] and another of his songs, 'Love and Courage',

which was published in 1836, though inducing 'less pleasure than anything we know of the author's', in a reviewer in The Musical World, nevertheless elicited the comment 'But Spohr is a giant; and we care not to treat him with our critical nibblings'.[126] Even Gauntlett, who found much to criticise in Spohr was forced to admit: 'as an orchestral, and operatic writer, but few, if any, can successfully enter the lists with him'.[127]

There were some critics, however, who did not accept that Spohr warranted the pre-eminent position which 'his most accomplished contemporaries' were supposed respectfully to have accorded him; as for example the one who had maintained that he was 'certainly inferior to men such as Cherubini and Mendelssohn'.[128] The reference to Cherubini* is an untypical one and not particularly significant, since he and Spohr occupied such different niches in the musical world as to make comparison irrelevant; moreover, Cherubini could no longer be regarded seriously as a productive composer and would more aptly have been categorised with the great departed. Mendelssohn, on the other hand, could be seen as a real rival to Spohr in all fields except opera; even in music which involved the violin as a leading instrument there were undoubtedly those who would have urged his claims to be seen as greater than Spohr. But in the 1830's Mendelssohn was not yet the universal idol that he later became in England; the Italian Symphony was neglected for some years at the Philharmonic Society after its first performance in 1838, and reviews of his works were by no means always complimentary. His overture Fingal's Cave, for instance had been coolly reviewed in The Athenaeum in 1832, where it was asserted that 'as descriptive music, it was decidedly a failure'.[129] Even St Paul was not an unqualified success, despite the high hopes some critics had of it in advance. In The Morning Chronicle a direct challenge to Spohr's supremacy in the realm of oratorio had been hinted at, when the critic remarked:

> Spohr's oratorio, The Last Judgement, is certainly the greatest sacred work of any living composer excepting perhaps, Mendelssohn's St Paul, an oratorio which, if we may judge from descriptions given of its performance at Dusseldorf , approaches more nearly to the greatness of Handel than anything that has been produced since his time.[130]

* One of the few writers who gave Cherubini such a high rank was G. French Flowers (see below p. 152).

In the event of St Paul's performance at Birmingham, however, not all critics were convinced of the work's greatness; a writer in The Analyst commented:

> This oratorio has been likened by some critics to those of Handel; by others, equally without reason, to those of Sebastian Bach. With neither of these great men has Mendelssohn, so far as we can perceive, much similarity, either as regards the grandeur and originality of their conceptions, or the mode of carrying those conceptions out.[131]

Davison, too, in contrast to his later attitude, was clearly concerned by what he saw as an injudicious exaltation of Mendelssohn, for in a letter addressed to the directors of the Philharmonic Society which was published in The Musical Magazine under the pseudonym Arthur Pendragon, he complained that Spohr's overture to Alruna had not been given at the Philharmonic in 1834 when one of the Mendelssohn's had been given twice, and referred sarcastically to 'Mendelssohn Bartholdy, whom, with the exception of the Chevalier Neukomme, your society seems to imagine to be the only living composer worthy of notice'.[132]

On balance it seems unlikely that, in the 1830's, Mendelssohn's popularity was to any significant degree responsible for diminishing Spohr's. As has been seen, (above p. 88) both were regarded as composers of serious and 'scientific' music and both derived equal benefit from the growing taste for those sorts of composition. In fact, Chorley seems to have felt that, if anything, Mendelssohn suffered from Spohr's popularity. He remarked after a performance of the Third Symphony:

> We no more belong to the party against Spohr, than to the party ecstatic in praise of all his works, however idealess or self-iterative; but we feel that to pass over many better orchestral pieces - for instance Mendelssohn's - and to admit such a heavy composition is a false step on the part of the directors.[133]

And again the following year he complained that Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony should be 'so strangely laid on the shelf by the same Philharmonic authorities who satiate their audiences with the works of Spohr';[134] a direct reversal of Davison's fears. At a later date the question of their relative merits was more hotly argued.

In order to discover the reason why some critics thought they could discern signs of a decline in Spohr's popularity towards the end of the decade, therefore, we must seek elsewhere. Firstly, however, it should be noted that popular or not, there were many more performances of his music and that many more people were listening to it in 1839 than in 1830. This was, of course, largely a result of the increased interest in serious German music, and the substantial rise in the number of concerts which had accompanied it. Chorley, for instance, remarked in 1837 that concert giving was 'carried on this year with such an incessant furor as must become, in the end exhausting',[135] and in 1838 that music was 'now at the rate of a concert a day'.*[136] Among the most significant developments was the advent of the chamber music concert which rapidly caught on after the mid 1830's and familiarised concert goers with much more of the chamber music repertoire than it had previously been possible for them to hear.** They so quickly attracted an enthusiastic following that Chorley could comment:

> The great crowd...(and) its attentive silence, bore as comfortable a testimony to the extraordinary progress which music is now making in London as we could desire to receive.[137]

Spohr's works were frequent items in the programmes of the chamber concerts and, often to the critics' surprise, seem to have found a receptive audience; thus The Morning Chronicle said of one of Mori and Lindley's concerts:

> The crowded and fashionable audience assembled to listen to a series of long instrumental pieces, which a few years ago, nobody would have thought of performing in public, shows how much the taste for this description of music is increasing. SPOHR'S Nonetto, with which the concert began, is a most complicated and elaborate composition, taking three quarters of an hour to perform; yet it was listened to with the utmost attention and every movement much applauded. This was the more remarkable, as the piece, though admirably executed, and full of beauties of detail, was by no means striking in general effect.[138]

* He was referring only to 'classical' concerts.

** In fact, they were so successful that they even came in for a touch of satire from The Morning Post which, under the heading 'Classical Double Drum Concerts', wrote:

> In consequence of the success of the quartet parties, the wind instrument meetings, and pianoforte soirees, it is rumoured that Chipps /the timpanist of the Philharmonic/ intends to give a series of concerts, at which 'classical compositions' for the double drum will be the principal feature, to be relieved by concertos for the opheceid. (quoted in MW, viii(1838), 220).

It is difficult to assess audience reactions in general to Spohr's music, but enough evidence exists in reviews which mention encores, as for example at the Societa Armonica where it was said that 'O calma o bella' from Der Berggeist 'richly deserved the compliment';[139] or enthusiastic applause, as at the Royal Academy concert where the Violin Concerto in G was 'deservedly applauded to the echo',[140] to make it clear that audiences did not, on the whole, listen to Spohr unwillingly. Nevertheless an increasing number of critics were taking a jaundiced view of his work. Had this critical tendency gone unchecked by events, it is likely that gloomy prognostications about a decline in his popularity having already set in might have had more substance; for the new spirit of more scholarly criticism was obviously directed mainly at the professional musicians in whom the strength of Spohr's popularity lay. That the critics' points were tending to strike home can be inferred from the remark of the writer in The Musical World who, though unwillingly reading the detractions, reposed upon their judgement with confidence because he believed them to be 'men superior to the weakness of a headlong prejudice'.[141] One of the most articulate of these critics was H.J. Gauntlett, author of an article on 'The Last Hours of The Saviour',[142] which is carefully and fairly argued, with plenty of specific references to the music in support of his case, and the whole argument is strengthened by constant reference to the beauties of the music as well as its defects; he was clearly saying that there was more in Spohr than some were prepared to admit but less than others claimed.* Gauntlett's objections were set out in greater detail than those of other critics at the time, but the substance of them can be found in numerous reviews. Gauntlett complained:

> although we are prepared to admit, that the individual and marked peculiarity of his style...are characteristics which prominently distinguish his compositions from all other writers; - still it is a matter for regret that so eminent a composer should so often excite the mind to reminiscences of his former triumphs - not only in the details and execution of the different movements,

* But whether he could truly be characterised as free from headlong prejudice is cast into doubt by the report of a conversation he had with William Glover, where in response to Glover's admiration for Spohr's works he exclaimed vehemently, 'What! do you really like that stomach-ache music'. (Glover, Memoirs, ii, 238)

but particularly in melody.[143]

He then proceeded to give examples of his assertion. The same points had been made by Holmes (and many others) when he remarked that his music was 'imprinted with an identity of character and a fondness for certain modulations and cadences';[144] and, in 1837 The Atlas, referring to 'Tears of Sorrow' from The Crucifixion, exclaimed in exasperation:

> there is not a single progression in the melody, nor yet one modulation or effect of the orchestra, which to those who are conversant with Spohr's writings, has not long been perfectly familiar. We have glanced through the Crucifixion itself, and are much mistaken if musicians will not find this remark equally applicable to the whole oratorio. The truth is, we believe, that Spohr has written himself up, and if he only produce these reversions of himself, will not long conceal from the public that he is as a composer, utterly bankrupt of invention and spiritually deceased.[145]

Another feature which Gauntlett arraigned was the intricacy of his compositions which had given rise so often to the descriptions 'laboured' and 'scientific'. He believed that this was one reason Spohr did not 'possess imagination in the epic form', saying, 'there is so much fulness, such a profusion of point as to prevent it'.[146] This observation too, was made on several occasions, as when The Musical World remarked of Die Weihe der Töne:

> there is more labouring of point, more expenditure of polish in this symphony than would have sufficed for all the symphonies of Mozart and Beethoven, if taken together. Dignity and elegance, an even and courtly suavity, accompanied with captivating and brilliant recollections, supply the place of noble and free thoughts - a new and daring expression.[117]

The Analyst put it more bluntly when it commented of the same symphony: 'we hesitate not to avow that the excessive wire-drawing of his subjects fairly wearied us out',[148] and of a quartet in E flat, 'the composition was a perfect specimen of the learned mannerism of Spohr, and tedious to the very verge of endurance'.[149] The latter sentiments were ones with which Chorley would have heartily agreed, for he often complained that Spohr worked his subjects to death, but he claimed, moreover, that the ideas themselves were generally weak; he remarked of the Nonet: 'its author's one-sided pertinacity made itself most tediously felt, from being employed on trite and insignificant

themes',[150] and of the Quintet op.52 that he was 'always preoccupied to stubbornness by one idea'.[151]

All these weaknesses (which will be examined in detail in a later chapter) were so constantly commented upon in the press that it certainly seems strange that Spohr was not rapidly discredited, especially as it was these same features which were largely responsible for his decline in popularity much later in the century; but in the 1830's, and for a considerable time after, there was clearly some other element in his style which made his music appealing even to many of those who were not blind to his defects. The truth of this is demonstrated by observations such as the one made when Die Weihe der Töne was first given in Edinburgh; there the critic commented:

> That Spohr is deficient in invention, or the power of creating new phrases, modulations, and progressions of harmony, is unquestionable, otherwise he would not so frequently and glaringly repeat himself. His phrases, modulations, and progressions, in the present work are to be found in many of his compositions already before the public, yet these are ever so beautiful, so delicate and so delicious, that we are constrained to yield ourselves up to their influence.[152]

Similar remarks are legion. The Analyst said of the Third Symphony: 'With all his mannerism and self repetitions Spohr ever and anon makes so direct an appeal to one's sympathies, that we feel disposed to throw all his egotism into the background',[153] and many other examples can be found.

From these sorts of observation it seems clear that the features which made his music immediately recognisable were in themselves so beguiling that with many this compensated for what it indubitably lacks in emotional and inventive range. Even those who, on abstract reflexion, could not help finding much to criticise in the music, were often, when listening to it effectively performed, forced to suspend their intellectual faculties and surrender themselves to its influence. This feeling is very clearly expressed in the report by the critic of The Times on the Norwich performance of Calvary in 1839, where he wrote:

> The effect of this extraordinary work upon the feelings is more powerful than we can describe...

> there is no cold musical criticism here; no questioning or calculating, "ought we to admire this, and is Spohr in truth the great composer we have heard him described to be?" We saw in the countenances of the immense multitude who crowded the hall the most unequivocal evidences of the composer's genius. Hundreds were melted to tears, and the deep and breathless silence which, from first to last, reigned throughout the vast assembly, betokened the heartfelt sympathy which thus enchained them.[154]

In fact, Spohr's visit to Norwich was crucial to the establishment of his reputation. The impact of his presence on English soil seems to have brought the 'subterraneous current' of appreciation, of which Gauntlett had spoken, strikingly to the surface. To some extent the reaction can be explained by the tendency in England to lionize great men; but there were also important practical reasons why his visit was in many ways a revelation. Perhaps the most important of these was that under his own direction the quality of the performance was so much improved that what had previously seemed obscure and impracticable was suddenly revealed to be intelligible and impressive.

There is ample evidence that the poor performances of Spohr's music by English musicians of which Holmes had complained in the 1820's were still the rule rather than the exception; indeed Gauntlett's remarks on the lack of understanding of his style, which prevailed even among most musicians (above pp. 72 & 78), indicate the improbability of his works having received an adequate interpretation: but more than that, they were constantly beset by sheer technical incompetence.

Even fairly well known orchestral works were not done justice to at the Philharmonic Concerts, where one might expect the highest standard of performance and it is quite clear, both from the nature of the music itself and from the comments of interested critics, that in Spohr's case poor performance was particularly detrimental to the music's effect. Spohr himself recognised this, for he observed: 'my music, if negligently played, can readily be so spoiled, that the connoisseur himself would be at a loss to understand it'.[155] And there were frequent comments to this effect from English critics. For example, The Athenaeum wrote of the Second Symphony given

at the Philharmonic in 1832; that it was:

> not executed with the fine proportion of light and shade wanting for its full effect... The violas in the band are at the back of the orchestra and sometimes quite inaudible, which prevented us following the train of conversational passages in which Spohr's music abounds.[156]

The Times made an almost identical observation when the First Symphony was given at the Philharmonic on May 26 1835, saying:

> A beautiful symphony of Spohr opened the first act... in general the performance was deficient in light and shade. The soft parts were too loud, and the forte passages too weak. Spohr, even in his best works becomes insipid without such relief.[157]

Curiously, The Spectator, reviewing the same concert, took a diametrically opposite stance, which suggests that for many listeners the low standard of performance was so familiar that they were unaware of the potential for improvement. It also indicates that deficiencies were not so crippling as to constitute a total bar to appreciation. The critic commented:

> The performance and reception of Spohr's Sinfonia bear decided testimony to the efficacy of the Philharmonic Society in training both the band and the audience to a correct appreciation of fine instrumental music. The improvement of both has been gradual; and we require now and then, to be reminded by some palpable fact, how far both have advanced in knowledge and practice. This masterly composition - worthy in every respect to rank with most of its class, which was listened to with such attention, and which excited such unequivocal marks of approbation from those who heard as well as from those who played it - was hissed on its first performance, some ten or twelve years since.[158]

There seems, in fact, to have been a certain amount of complacency among most of the audiences and critics alike; a tacit assumption that as long as the notes were mostly in the right place and the performance did not break down at any point nothing more could reasonably be expected. Beethoven's genius might have been able to survive this sort of treatment virtually unscathed: Spohr's could not. A few critics were aware of the problem and one of these observed that the deficiencies of English orchestral playing were very striking to musicians from the continent who were used to a much higher standard of ensemble, saying:

> the foreign critic is instantly and forcibly struck by a want of precision not only in the time, but in the observance of pianos, fortes, and crescendos.[159]

but there is some reason to believe that the Germans, too, frequently failed to do justice to Spohr, for in 1840 The Atlas observed of the performance of Faust by a German company: 'To our great astonishment we noticed the same want of feeling for the peculiar beauties of the music which is invariably found in English performances of the compositions of Spohr'.[160] But even worse, the Philharmonic orchestra, whose ranks contained a galaxy of individual talents which would have been hard to match anywhere in Europe, was not infrequently subject to orgies of wrong notes or occasionally to total breakdown. Holmes noted in 1836 that in Spohr's overture to Pietro von Abano: 'the violinists got through the allegro without scarifying the ears which was not formerly the case'.[161] Die Weihe der Töne, on the other hand, suffered some exceedingly shoddy performances until Spohr himself conducted it in 1843. When performed at the Societa Armonica in 1837 Chorley commented:

> the orchestra did not do justice to Spohr's symphony ... which strange to say was scantily applauded and even partially hissed, by an audience who, by this coldness and disapprobation, have placed their character for discrimination beyond dispute. To ourselves the symphonia by Spohr was a treat of the highest order.[162]

The reaction of the audience on that occasion gives some indication of the disastrous effect which such renderings could have on the music's impact. Even worse was the Philharmonic Society's attempt at it the following year. The orchestra came apart completely in the second movement and Chorley exclaimed in disgust:

> We anticipated a second hearing of Spohr's grand characteristic Symphony with so much pleasure, that we were proportionably mortified at its disgraceful performance on Monday night...[163]

Apart from the obvious hiatus, he also commented on the general lack of the finesse so essential to a proper appreciation of Spohr's music, saying: 'an extra measure of point and delicacy is required to rescue his expression from sickliness and his spirit from vulgarity'. Other critics were not so sympathetic to Spohr's requirements. A writer in The New Monthly Magazine had said,

regarding this symphony:

> as an individual violinist, he exacts more sometimes than any body of players are capable of, and as a thorough master of science he introduces those difficulties to produce effects that exist, perhaps, only in his own imagination. He does not stop to consider the possibility, or rather the probability of failure, but writes as if for a quartet party not for a full orchestra.[164]

And after the Philharmonic debacle in 1838 the critic of The Analyst blamed the breakdown not so much on the incompetence of Cipriani Potter's conducting or the inattention of the orchestra as on Spohr's unrealistic demands. His only slight criticism of the players was contained in a sentence which clearly illustrates the problems the majority must have experienced in trying to make sense of the music with so little assistance from the performers. He remarked: 'What our opinion may be when we become as acquainted with the author's design and treatment as the band ought to be, we pretend not to say'.[165]

There is no doubt that some critics, at least, recognised the special problems which Spohr's music posed in performance and were conscious of the fact that its requirements were seldom satisfied; thus one of them remarked of the overture to Jessonda after a Philharmonic performance in 1836:

> We have never heard the grand and solemn Overture to Jessonda performed as it should be: such music as Spohr's requires and deserves unmitigated watchfulness. It should not be treated like a threadbare sentiment in the mouth of an actor - trolled over the tongue and then bolted.[166]

In very much the same vein, Chorley commented after a poor performance of the Double Quartet in E minor in 1839:

> Spohr's music beyond that of all his contemporaries, calls for the utmost delicacy and expressiveness of manner - the highest possible polish - the most exact proportioning of parts to each other. We listened for these excellencies in vain.[167]

Most singers were apparently no better than instrumentalists, and on one occasion The Morning Post observed of a rendering of 'She Blooms a Flow'ret:' 'Mr Hobbes cannot sing Spohr; it is ridiculous for him to attempt it', but

the critic went on to put some of the blame on Spohr's shoulders, adding: 'No vocalist willingly undertakes Spohr's music, because he feels it is written by one who knows little of the real powers of the human voice'.[168] In view of the constant failure to give adequate performances of his choral works (see above p.72) this was an understandable assumption.

Perhaps the most important results of Spohr's visit to Norwich, therefore, were firstly, the proof that under expert direction and with adequate rehearsal the technical difficulties of his music could be overcome; and secondly, that when this was achieved features which had previously seemed obscure and effects which had seemed to be misjudged were revealed as perfectly calculated and natural. Nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in The Morning Chronicle's report from the festival, which avowed:

> On looking back to the whole festival, it appears that its most remarkable feature - a feature, indeed, which will make the Norwich festival of 1839 an era in the annals of music - was the production of Spohr's great work under the personal direction of its author. The performance on this occasion has enlightened many (and ourselves, we confess, among the number) as to the character of Spohr's sacred music. We have long possessed Mr Taylor's excellent edition of the work, and have heard it executed on a small scale in London; but we were not enabled by these means to form any adequate notion of its effect when performed by an immense vocal and instrumental orchestra, and with the precision derived from long and diligent preparation. From the extraordinary fulness of the score and complication of the parts, we had imagined that the harmony, in many places was confused and cumbrous; from the heaps of flats and sharps which met the eye - the crowds of dissonant combinations - the chromatic chords, and unusual intervals given to the voices, we had supposed that many passages were harsh and rugged, if not absolutely impracticable; and from the paucity of songs the want of duets, and the absence of other means usually employed to give lightness and variety to works of this nature, we had concluded that it was deficient in melody, and would be heavy and fatiguing in performance. All these opinions entertained by us in common with many other more competent judges, we find were very erroneous. Spohr's harmonies, full, complex, and chromatic as they are, require only to be clearly performed to be understood; his vocal intervals, though excessively difficult in execution, are smooth in effect; and, notwithstanding the small number of regular airs, there is no want of melody, for in every concerted movement, and every chorus, the most exquisite strains flow from every part of the orchestra. The listeners are carried away by the full tide of

> feeling, which rises at the very opening and never subsides till the last faint notes of the conclusion die away upon the ear, leaving us, as it were, spell-bound and in a trance, the influence of which was evinced by the dead silence which pervaded the immense assembly in St Andrew's Hall after the sounds from the orchestra were hushed.[169]

The emotional impact of the oratorio under these circumstances was tremendous. As in the case of Malibran and The Last Judgement, it was not only the audience who were overwhelmed; according to one reporter:

> One of the principal singers, a lady whose exemplary life, as well as her distinguished talents, render her an honour to her profession, declared to-day that the strength of her emotions sometimes almost overwhelmed her, and rendered her nearly unable to proceed.[170]

In the overture to Faust, too, the benefits of Spohr's conducting were greatly in evidence, and a writer in The Monthly Chronicle observed:

> Spohr made his overture to Faust, which for a long series of years has been huddled off at the Philharmonic, completely understood by the orchestra. The fughetta in the middle was now perfectly rendered, and the difficulties of its time vanquished.[171]

This is confirmed by the critic of The Times, who noted the unwontedly sustained interest and attention of the players, saying:

> Spohr...conducted his overture to Faust, and we may be said never to have heard it to such perfection before, although one of the stock pieces of the Philharmonic. This is one of the many advantages which the presence of a great foreign writer confers on an English orchestra. It was so when Weber visited England. He gave his most popular overture a new reading: and the same remark applies in this case, for the leading instrumentalists of the Philharmonic band, holding the same situations in the Norwich orchestra, will permanently profit by the advantage thus thrown in their way. And we may here remark, that we never witnessed anything like the same degree of enthusiasm as the London performers display. They have usually to perform a prescribed routine of duty, deriving little or no interest from novelty and therefore occasioning a very limited degree of excitement. Here they are acting under the strongest feeling of that kind; for no event could be so pregnant with interest to English instrumentalists as the presence of Spohr.[172]

There were many comments on the effectiveness of his conducting and enthusiasm of the performers. One critic remarked: 'Spohr's conducting is delightful; at once prodigious firm in the time, and illustrative by its motions of the effect intended'.[173] Another noted:

> In his manner of directing an orchestra he is a model; blending firmness with good temper and exacting the utmost accuracy from every performer, without ever by word, look, or gesture, wounding the feelings of any. He is, consequently, idolised by the members of the orchestra, who strain every nerve to please him.[174]

At Norwich Spohr appeared in the roles of composer, conductor and violinist, achieving a triumph in each of them. Only that of violinist remains to be considered. Here his influence was less pervasive in the long term, but the admiration which his playing elicited was a strong contributory factor to the general impression which he made as a great musician and also, as the greatest interpreter of his own music, he revealed beauties in it which had been beyond the grasp of native violinists. The Times remarked:

> there is a charm in his violin, when employed in the execution of his own music, which no other performer can impart. Many professional men from all parts of the kingdom were congregated in the hall, and it is an evening which they will not readily forget. We institute no comparison between Spohr and the other great violinists; he stands alone in his view of the character and resources of his instrument; they have their excellencies, he has his; but it may be safely affirmed that those who have not heard him have left one chapter of the violin school unread.[175]

The audience were not unresponsive to his performance; indeed, The Morning Chronicle noted that: 'On his first appearance in the orchestra he was welcomed with loud and reiterated cheers, and his performance was applauded to the echo'.[176]

It would be possible to dilate at much greater length on the extraordinary warmth of his reception and the profound effect which the performances of his music made on those who heard it, which was according to one critic 'greater... than I ever before witnessed on any similar occasion',[177] but enough has been cited to leave the magnitude of his triumph beyond question. From Norwich, via press reports and personal accounts the enthusiasm quickly spread to London; overnight the carping of critics who had been unresponsive to his music was smothered in an upsurge of interest and respect. A correspondent appealing for him to be induced to come to London wrote ecstatically:

> Could the admirers of Handel, Mozart or Beethoven, bring either from his grave to preside at an oratorio, with what delight and enthusiasm would he not be welcomed and gazed upon! And is their great living rival to return home unheeded and unheard except by the affluent gentry of Norwich?[178]

Not everyone would have wholly concurred in awarding Spohr quite such a high position, but there is no doubt that the leading London musicians who had participated in the festival must have returned to the metropolis full of excitement and with a rekindled zeal for his works. However much the critics might squabble among themselves and complain of puffing and other discreditable practices, Spohr's own reputation had been immeasurably enhanced by this visit and a much greater tone of respect was almost universally adopted towards him in the press.

Chapter 5

1843 - 1848

The 1840's may be considered as the high point of Spohr's popularity in England, though his influence on English composers had probably been more powerful in the preceding decade. In 1843 he visited London for the first time since 1820 (he had, however, passed through fleetingly in 1839), and was greeted with unprecedented enthusiasm. The Musical World felt that the evening of the performance of The Fall of Babylon at Exeter Hall under Spohr's baton

> must be regarded, to speak entirely without hyperbole, as a great national event...for it has called forth a demonstration of popular enthusiasm, such as had been rarely manifest upon any occasion, political or civil in this country.[1]

In 1848 it could be asserted 'Now that Mendelssohn is dead Spohr holds the position of the first composer of the day without a possible rival',[2] but even during Mendelssohn's lifetime few would have hesitated to award Spohr the palm if only from the respect due to his seniority. Nevertheless, there were many cross-currents of opinion underlying the predominant view, and slight, though clearly discernable shifts in the general consensus.

The period from 1840 to 1843 saw a number of significant performances of

his works in England. These included the first stagings of Faust and Jessonda, the first performances of the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Symphonies and The Fall of Babylon, the introduction of several new chamber works and, over all, an increasingly widespread performance of his works. They were not received uncritically by any means, but the tone of the criticism had become almost universally respectful. Individual details of a particular composition or even a whole work might occasionally be singled out for censure and sometimes certain aspects of his style were subject to severe animadversion, but in general this criticism was made within the bounds of an unquestioned acceptance that Spohr was one of the great composers of all time. In fact there seems only to have been one critic of any importance who did not subscribe to this attitude, that was Chorley of The Athenaeum. His reservations became increasingly pronounced over the years, culminating in an almost personal animosity.

Curiously, however, while old works achieved new successes and were received with greater relish than before, several premières were given notably cool receptions. This was especially the case with the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, both of which were first performed by the Philharmonic Society in 1840.

The Fifth Symphony had been written in 1837 for the Concerts Spirituels in Vienna, where it was first performed in 1838. At that time The Musical World carried a review of it in its reports of music from the continent, where it was hailed as 'Spohr's latest and certainly most excellent symphony'. In the first movement it referred to an 'incomparable' oboe solo and to the 'novel and delightful treatment of themes'; the larghetto second movement was described as having a 'majestic simplicity which forms an interesting contrast to the splendour by which you have just been dazzled'; the Scherzo was said to be 'full of originality, the skill of the composer appears at every note'; and the reviewer concluded:

> It might seem, after so much to surprise and delight, that the author had exhausted the resources of his art;

> but the Finale discovers new beauties. A theme of extraordinary beauty crowns the whole; simple at first, it rises by degrees, and gathering strength as it advances, exhibits the warmth of a sublime and imposing passion... The mind of the musician-poet is at length fully explained, and every heart is filled with enthusiasm and delight.[3]

Of the critics who noticed its rehearsal at a Philharmonic trial night in February 1840, however, only Edward Taylor, as might be expected from his close relationship with the composer, gave it a good report; and even he was uncharacteristically muted in his praise, saying merely that 'it will be found in all respects worthy of the first of living composers, and the last movement is a magnificent work of art'.[4] Other critics who were present seem to have been unimpressed. The Musical World disparaged it,[5] and The Atlas commented tersely that it did 'not promise any great increase of his reputation'.[6]

A similar pattern was followed in reviews of its performance at the Philharmonic on March 9. Chorley had scarcely a good word to say for it. He confessed that the performance had been atrocious, describing it as 'lethargic' and complaining of the orchestra's 'drumming, braying and scraping';nevertheless, he considered that the symphony

> ...intrinsically, as well as in conjunction, was narcotic. The first allegro in 3/4 time, is heavy, and unpleasing in subject; the slow movement in A flat is better, but clogged and faded if compared with the clear and fresh slow movements of the really great symphonists; the minuet clumsy and characterless, and, as too often happens with Sphor's minuets, totally devoid of relief in the trio,... the finale bolder and wrought with the master's usual skill, but still only skilful where it should have been engaging.[7]

Henry Smart in The Atlas, expressed a much more balanced viewpoint, though he clearly did not feel that the work had the seeds of greatness in it. He observed:

> Spohr's new symphony, without being a work of positive genius, is just such as Spohr and no other living creature, could have written. In all that relates to workmanship - treatment, instrumentation, etc. - it is, of course, the perfection of artistical refinement; but so much of its matter is already familiar to the musician that it may be said to possess but little striking

> interest. Tender and beautiful thoughts, unquestionably, break forth in almost every bar; still we have so often contemplated and admired them in almost every other work by the same hand, that their fascination is fast wearing away. The last movement, however, contains much of new and extraordinary beauty: it is the gem of the whole, and worth at least twice the value of all that precedes it.[8]

The Musical World agreed with these accounts in regarding the Finale as the best movement, but concluded that the symphony, 'notwithstanding the vigorous writing in the last movement, was ineffective and failed to attract the admiration which usually attends the performance of this eminent writer's compositions'.[9] The symphony's only committed protagonist in the press was Edward Taylor, who eschewed any qualifications in his praise of the work; he considered that failure to appreciate it was the fault of the listener. His review suggests, however, that whether or not they appreciated it, some at least of the audience were far from indifferent to it. He wrote:

> The new Sinfonia of Spohr excited more interest than any piece that followed it; since of all living writers Spohr alone seems able to produce a composition of this class that is destined to live: and it is, in all respects, a work worthy of his great genius... Like Spohr's other Symphonies, and we may add those of Beethoven which most emphatically indicate their author's originality of thought, this composition was not received by the audience, at first hearing, with a burst of enthusiasm. The majority of the Philharmonic hearers must first ascertain whether they may safely commit themselves to applaud a composition of which they are imperfect judges, before they venture on so bold a step.[10]

With respect to the Historical Symphony performed on April 6 even Taylor was obliged to acknowledge that it had been a failure, but he adroitly turned the failure into a proof of Spohr's genius and originality, saying that it was

> ...an experiment never likely to succeed, and especially when made by a man of truly original genius. A mind incapable of original thought, and unequal to creation may copy with some success; but one which possesses these powers in an eminent degree is incompetent to speak the language of others.[11]

The work is, indeed, one of the most extraordinary experiments of the period: its form can perhaps best be illustrated by quoting at length the review that

appeared in The Musical World, which at the same time provides a good example of the generally prevailing attitude towards Spohr in the press. It stated:

> Spohr's new symphony produced even less effect on Monday evening than on the occasion of its first trial. The fault lies, perhaps, rather in the design than its execution; the composer's intention excludes unity of plan and substitutes four unconnected movements in as many distinct styles, which, however clever, are, after all, but imitations; and, therefore, not only of minor interest, but open to the most ungracious species of criticism - that by comparison. The first movement illustrates the period of Bach and Handel - the heroic age of music. The whole of this is well conceived and superbly instrumented, as usual; but the imitation is perhaps more apparent here than in any other part of the work; Spohr has unavoidably impregnated it here and there with the luscious peculiarities of his own style, and thus destroyed the semblance of reality. The larghetto, after the manner of Haydn and Mozart, is more successful: the composer has not been forced so far out of his usual current of thought, and his writing is proportionably more natural. This movement, considered without reference to its imitative character, is the most beautiful portion of the symphony. Beethoven is aimed at in the scherzo, but not happily, we think. Some of his eccentricities of form and instrumentation are accurately hit off; but the whole is tinged with Spohrishness and lacks power and breadth to render the illustration perfect. The intention of the finale was evidently overlooked by the audience, who hissed it for what they, probably, deemed its essential unworthiness. Judging from its clamour, its redundance of leaps from one scale to another, and its looseness of construction, we presume Spohr intended to satirize the present French and Italian school of instrumental writing; and if so, he has succeeded admirably. The audience, however, did not see the joke, and consequently treated that as earnest which the composer could only have meant as a severe, but not unfair, piece of ridicule. On the whole, notwithstanding that this "Historical Symphony" contains a good deal of fine writing, we heartily wish it had not been performed at this concert. It is, at best, but a series of elaborate caricatures; and, in effect, has a tendency to diminish the reputation for high artistic feeling which Spohr has so deservedly acquired.[12]

Most critics were at pains to distinguish between criticism of the work and criticism of the composer: The Morning Chronicle observed that 'the piece, notwithstanding the great genius of the author, was far from effective',[13] and The Atlas remarked that 'Its design and execution are, on the whole, equally unworthy of the composer's reputation'.[14] But at the same time all noted that as The Morning Chronicle expressed it,'it was received with the utmost coldness'[15] by the audience. The hissing of the last movement, however, was put

down to a misunderstanding of its intention and The Atlas even hazarded the guess that the satirising of bad composers may have been too near the mark, and mischievously wondered whether it had been hissed 'because the joke was not appreciated, or because any persons in the room endured a sense of personal ridicule'.[16] Taylor's explanation of the failure of the last movement was simpler; he considered that 'This is a level to which Spohr has not the power to descend'.[17] Only Chorley took a more decidedly hostile view and used the symphony's failure as an opportunity to launch a general criticism of Spohr's music. He felt that it could be seen as 'illustrating the peculiarities of a composer concerning whose merits "doctors disagree," - and its reception.., evincing a degree of intelligence and discrimination which...we hardly expected from a London audience'.[18]

The number of people who could hear symphonies at the Philharmonic concerts, of course, was proportionately a small part of the London concert-going public, though the influence of critical opinion in crystallising attitudes towards Spohr among the journals' wider readership should not be underestimated. The productions of Faust and Jessonda at the Prince's Theatre, on the other hand, brought his music to a much larger audience. For one thing, the cheaper seat prices opened it to those who could not afford the Philharmonic subscription of 10/6 per concert; for another, the performance was not simply given once, but repeated throughout the season. The interest which these operas aroused is reflected in the number and length of press reports and, in the case of Faust, the warmth of conflicting opinions on its merits.

Opera stood somewhat apart from other forms of music in England, and it also presented considerable diversity within itself. The Italian opera, as elsewhere in Europe, was largely a social affair, the haunt of the Haut Ton and the aristocracy, where the object was as much to be seen and heard as to see and listen. In common with its foreign counterparts it was riddled with cliques and claques; what interest there was in the proceedings on stage was centred mostly on overpaid foreign singers and it was not unknown for the

programme to be interrupted by demonstrations in favour of some singer not employed by the management but demanded by the audience.* It can be conjectured with confidence that Spohr's musically complex and demanding operas would not have been acceptable fare in such a context. Only in 1852 and 1853 when attitudes had changed somewhat were Faust and Jessonda given at the Royal Italian Opera, by royal command, and then they had, of course, to be given in Italian versions, which in the case of Faust entailed the composition of a complete set of Italian recitatives.

The other main operatic performances were of English ballad operas. A considerable number of native composers were engaged in the composition of such works, including Bishop, Barnett, Macfarren, Balfe and many more obscure figures. Most of their efforts enjoyed only short-lived success, though individual numbers might occasionally achieve almost the status of folk song, as was the case with Bishop's Home Sweet Home. The audience for this kind of operatic performance was drawn largely from the middle classes and the relative cheapness of the lowest price of admission opened them up to the humbler members of that class. As with the Italian opera, the administration of the English opera was suffused with corruption and one critic in 1839 remarked that it was marred by'a system of puffing which would turn the stomach of a rhinoceros'.[19] It was within this context that Azor and Zemire had been given in 1831, for the repertoire was sometimes extended by the introduction of translated, and often heavily arranged versions of successful foreign operas. However, as had been discovered in 1831, Spohr's music, while exciting the professionals, had been no more acceptable to the usual patrons of the English opera than it would have been to the habitues of the Italian opera (see p. 62above).

The establishment of a German opera company at the Prince's Theatre in 1840 opened up a new area for London music, giving the public their first opportunity, in most instances, to hear the great German operas in their original versions. It was not fashionable, nor did it cater for the lowest common denominator of public taste; its existence, therefore, argues that

* For example an incident at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1842, for an account of which see The Times. 27:VI:1842.

by that date it was believed there was a sufficiently large body of people interested in serious opera for its own sake to make the venture profitable.

For Faust on May 20 1840, at any rate, the house was full to capacity, and the level of eager anticipation can be conjectured from the opening sentence of the review in The Atlas which remarked that 'Its performance forms a new era in the experience of music-lovers of the metropolis, who have long earnestly desired to hear an opera by Spohr in an unmixed condition'.[20] Whether it lived up to the audience's expectations is difficult to determine. The Spectator had no doubts that it had, for its review remarked:

> The success of the opera was greater than we anticipated... almost every piece was welcomed with warm approbation at its close... and at the conclusion of the opera the opinion of the audience was unequivocally given.[21]

But in The Times the reaction was differently construed; there the critic commented: 'The audience bestowed moderate applause at the end of every piece, and showed no great enthusiasm at its conclusion'.[22] A similar impression is given in The Era, whose reviewer considered the opera to be 'nothing but a string of exercises in modulation and counterpoint'; he observed sarcastically:

> as most amateurs have, for many years past, been gloating over the pianoforte copy, they were naturally attracted to hear a real performance of it; and consequently every seat was occupied. With the exception of a few, who were determined to be charmed with everything they heard, the admirers of Spohr were undoubtedly disappointed.[23]

On the question of its likelihood of long term success there was more agreement; The Times felt that 'With all its merits it is impossible to predict that it will be so general a favourite as any that have preceded it at this house,'[24] and The Spectator admitted that 'It is a work which invites and will repay the closest study of the musician, although it probably will not reach the popularity of many operas of far inferior pretensions'.[25] On almost every other point, however, each critic's views were significantly different. Chorley could find nothing to praise but the orchestration and conceded merely that 'taken separately, we find his operas, though variety be not reached therein, and every bar be tinctured by his mannerism, less ennuyant than his symphonies'. Others were less blunt. The Times admitted that

> There was a tacit acknowledgment on the part of the audience that all was well done, but the attention was never arrested, the ear never charmed by the flow of melody, the heart was never touched. The whole is like a carefully, learned composition, in which the means of captivating are passed over, and the head of the sober connoisseur is rather considered than are the feelings of the many.[26]

The Morning Chronicle began by observing that Faust was 'generally considered the masterpiece of the greatest living composer of the German dramatic school', but it went on to say:

> We confess, that with much admiration, the representation of the piece has left an impression of disappointment... That critic, indeed, must have a greater promptitude of decision...than we pretend to, who will venture, on a single hearing, to give a decided opinion as to the character of so great and (musically speaking so profound a work.[27]

After much more discussion of the work in detail, the critic showed the uncertainty of his feelings by a promise to return to the subject in a future issue, but seems to have failed to do so.

One person who had no such uncertainty, and who appears to have had little time for that of others, was the writer of a lively article in The Musical World. He launched straight into a hard hitting attack on his critical colleagues, saying:

> The newspaper critics have stumbled on a puzzler at last for their "talented pens". Spohr's Faust, clearly enough, does not sit comfortably on their stomachs, and yet they are somewhat scrupulous about avowing their distaste for the dose. Some of the products of this kind of antagonist-action are rather amusing. In some quarters we hear of Faust as "deficient in melody", but yet possessing a great deal of "harmony"; - in others, it is represented as very "scientific, but not pleasing"; and much more fiddle-faddle of a like tendency, plainly showing that the critics have got into shoal water, where they will probably remain until the next tide of Donizetti, or some similar deliverance shall float them off. The fact is that the "melody", the "harmony", and the "science", of Spohr's operatic chef d'œuvre are all equally beyond their ken. So seldom is the London public favoured, for the first time, with dramatic music that is not either pure slip-slop, or else exaggerated beyond all bounds of rational endurance, that the duty of writing "fashionable notices" of such matters is a most innocent and matter-of-course occupation, and the production of a first-rate opera, suddenly startles us with the discovery that a critic really ought to know something of the subject on which

> he vouchsafes his comments.. We write for the musical, and not the fashionable, world, and therefore do not intend to give an "analysis" of Faust. Our musical readers, if they have not previously heard it in public, doubtless know it by the surer process of private study, and to those who do not, we earnestly recommend a thorough perusal of its score before a visit to the Prince's Theatre, or -(allowing for the difference of musical education) - they may not, perhaps, be more smitten with it on a first hearing than the critics aforesaid. Those who know it, and, at the same time, have any pretentions to judicial capacity, will not require us to point out that, if it does not contain "melody" (for which read "Son Vergin verozza", "Suona la tromba", "Vivi tu", "Trona e corona", "Jim Crow", "Nix my dolly", cum multis aliis) it is full of examples in which the musical scale is at least thrown into forms of intense beauty; - we will not quibble about terms - "melody" it certainly is not, if the term be at all applicable to the things we have just quoted but it nevertheless frequently realizes our utmost anticipations concerning music. Those who know it, are also aware that it contains some of Spohr's most beautiful writing, and do not need us to help them to the conclusion that this, if fitly executed, is rather more likely to be "pleasing" than anything else.[28]

The implications of this passage are clear enough. Chorley had alluded, in his review of the opera, to 'the vicissitude through which the composer's reputation has passed among us, and the violent partisanship of which it has been the object', and he went on to observe:

> By some, he has been extolled to the seventh heaven, as surpassing Mozart, Weber, and Beethoven in right of sweet melodies, rich harmonies, and magnificent conceptions - by others degraded to the level of those respectable, but most wearisome persons who produce a multitude of carefully-executed works, upon the liberal allowance of half an idea.[29]

Plenty of evidence has been cited in the previous chapter to confirm the veracity of Chorley's statement and there is no reason to assume that it was any less true in 1840 than it had been during the preceding decade; but, while conflicting opinions about any well-known composer are bound to continue, there can be significant shifts of emphasis. In the 1830's the evidence for the existence of the sort of eulogistic attitude, described by Chorley, among professional musicians and serious amateurs, is very strong; yet few articles in the press came close to expressing it, while very many tended towards the disparagement of Spohr's achievement. In the 1840's this proportion

was reversed; for the first time most criticism started from the assumption that Spohr was already established among the great composers. Thus it could be said in a review of a piano duet arrangement of the overture to Faust in 1841: 'Criticism of ours on a composition already enrolled among the imperishable efforts of the human mind, would be more than superfluous'.[30]

This change was partly the result of new young blood in musical journalism; the young musicians who had been so powerfully captivated in the early 1830's were now achieving positions of influence and were able to give free rein to their enthusiasms. Of these Davison is the prime example, and in the early 1840's he brought an assertiveness to the championship of Spohr which was undoubtedly influential. Others, seem gradually to have been encouraged in their support for Spohr by the revelation of new beauties in the music, which Spohr's own direction at Norwich had provided (see above p. 108); or simply by the general increase in competent performances of his works. Even the highly critical attitude of The Atlas in the late 1830's seems to have been a temporary aberration. In fact, according to Edward Taylor, it was only now that the public at large were becoming familiar with Spohr and if, as is commonly accepted, the press partly leads and partly follows public opinion, it is probably fair to assume that Taylor's assèssment of the situation, in his review of Faust, accurately reflects the general trend; he contended that

> The vigour, as well as the extent of Spohr's genius, are yet but partially made known to the English public. His fame it is true, has been extending year by year: his power is acknowledged more generally because it is more widely felt; and every fresh display of it seems to stamp him as at once the greatest instrumental, sacred and dramatic composer now living.[31]

That Taylor's belief in Spohr's genius was being increasingly shared by his fellow critics, is borne out by the reception of Jessonda about a month after Faust. Perhaps they were chastened by the onslaughts of The Musical World, or possibly they genuinely found the music to be finer, or it may simply have been that the performance came closer to realising the composer's

intentions than had that of Faust, which The Atlas considered 'the feeblest effort we have witnessed at the Prince's Theatre'.[32] There seems little doubt that the standard was higher and that this contributed to its success with the public, for Chorley remarked acerbically:

> The company is many degrees stronger than it was; and, in proof, its exertions are able to make the public pleased with the cloying and ponderous opera of "Jessonda".[33]

The Morning Chronicle felt that

> The production of Jessonda, the last and best dramatic composition of Spohr, has been the greatest and most successful effort of the German opera company... /it was/ received by the audience in a manner which must ensure its frequent repetition.[34]

But The Atlas considered that 'The performance as a whole was quite unworthy of Spohr's charming music'. However, this critic's admiration for the music was so high that probably nothing but perfection would have satisfied him, for he averred that 'The music of this opera is one unbroken stream of loveliness', and gave a list of various numbers which he asserted to be 'specimens of musical beauty, the like of which very few modern operas can boast'.[35]

Chorley's was the only dissonant voice in the press. The critic of The Era who had been so scathing about Faust seems to have been unwilling to swim against the tide of opinion and contented himself merely with describing the plot, making no comment about the music. Other critics were ecstatic in their praise, ranking the opera with the very greatest examples of the genre. Taylor felt that it 'must be placed on the same level with Don Juan, Fidelio and Euryanthe',[36] while The Morning Chronicle asserted that 'Jessonda is not surpassed by any opera that we know, and it is equalled by very few'.[37] The Britannia remarked 'We must give it our unqualified praise; it is a tissue of the most lovely melodies and delicious combinations of harmony we ever heard'.[38] The Times, too, could not find a single criticism to make, and seems almost to have been bemused by the greatness of the work; its review is interesting as an example of the persistence of certain types of attitude,

saying:

> It is difficult to convey even a remote idea of this very elaborate and recondite composition... The instrumentation is wonderful...so profuse is the composer of his ideas, that the stage and the orchestra seem two resources, and it is hard to listen duly to the one without passing over the other too lightly. It is not a work to be heard once, to tickle the ear for a moment, but it must be studied again and again, and still it will be exhaustless... Far different from Marschner's opera played the night before, and, standing by it in majestic contrast, it does not strike and animate, but it absorbs, gradually arrests, and then grasps the mind, which follows the composer as a leader to some unknown region.[39]

The introduction of four major works in one season following closely on the excitement of Spohr's visit to Norwich, must have had very considerable stimulating effect on public interest. The triumph of Jessonda, about which even Chorley's antagonism was muted, had probably done much to efface the unfavourable impression created by the symphonies, and, most importantly, it had given confirmation to the claim that he must be regarded as pre-eminent as an opera composer, as well as in all other branches of the art.

Apart from these important performances in 1840 there were many minor but, cumulatively, no less important events which must have helped to stimulate public interest in Spohr and his works during the next couple of seasons. There seems to have been an increasing number of performances and publications of his vocal music. Not only extracts from the operas but also Lieder were becoming more common items in concert programmes. The publication of some of the latter in collections such as Gems of German Song is particularly important since the Lieder were one of the few branches of Spohr's output which were technically within the capabilities of any accomplished amateur. On the whole these were well received by critics. The Atlas, reviewing Book VII of Gems of German Song which contained Spohr's 'O'er Vale and River', and 'The Carnival', felt that with respect to the first 'It would be difficult to fix on a small piece of Spohr's writing which shows so nicely balanced an account of his beauties and defects', but of the second, that it was 'conceived in his very highest tone, and therefore needs no argument to prove

its faultless beauty'.[40] And at a quartet concert where two of the op.103 songs with clarinet were performed the critic felt that 'The Bird and the Maiden' was 'one of the loveliest morsels ever penned by its composer'. Another small scale piece introduced at about the same time was the little group of walzes entitled Erinnerungen am Marienbad; this, too, was well received, eliciting from The Atlas the comment that:

> The usual luxuriance of Spohr's spirit pervades this charming composition, and though it contains but little that has not often emanated from the same hand, its morsels of old acquaintance are abstractly so beautiful, and so frequently diversified by new aspects of position, that we would not care to have them expunged, even in favour of fresher material.[41]

The Musical World was equally captivated and took the opportunity in reviewing it to uphold the merits of serious German music, saying:

> Here is a stinging reproof to Herrn Strauss, Lanner, Labitzsky, and all such gentry! Here is music to which ladies may dance and musicians listen with equal delight... the whole is, like all Spohr's small pieces of handicraft, the perfection of graceful beauty. The pianoforte arrangement is from one of the most exquisitely finished orchestral scores on a small scale we have ever seen.[42]

Other short extracts and arrangements appeared in The Harmonist or Musical Cabinet, a publication issued in 1840 in a series of weekly parts at the very moderate price of 3d each. Several were arranged by J.W. Davison and included songs, items from Faust, from string quartets, as well as a piano arrangement of the whole of Spohr's overture Macbeth which the title described as 'now performing at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane' (March 28 1840). In 1843 the series was reissued as a set.

A major work, published in piano duet arrangement about this time, was the Second Symphony. It appeared as no. 7 of Wessel and Stapleton's Bibliothèque Classique* and was reviewed in The Musical World in February 1842. The review contains so many points of interest and reveals so clearly some of what Chorley referred to as 'vicissitudes through which the composer's reputation has passed', that it is worth quoting in full. The author of this article, which has the subscription D., was almost certainly Davison.

* A considerable number of Spohr's works were arranged for piano duet in this series, including Symphonies 1 to 6, the Nonet, 3 Double Quartets, 5 Quintets and 2 Quartets.

This symphony, is beyond comparison the most perfect orchestral composition that has proceeded from the pen of Spohr. Whether we consider it as the result of profound musicianship, or as the outpouring of prolific genius, it stands alone, as an incomparable specimen of one of the two great modern styles. To the disrepute of the Philharmonic Society be it spoken, this noble work, though written by the author expressly for their orchestra nearly twenty years ago, has only been performed three or four times since its first appearance, and then with an apathy and indifference which reflect any thing but credit on the judgement and musical appreciative faculty of that powerful body of artists. The few who have been charmed by its manifold beauties, and have acknowledged its transcendant merits, have, from year to year, vainly hoped for its appearance in the programmes of the Philharmonic, while the first symphony of the same composer, so immeasurably its inferior, has been an annual feature. At last, however, some eight years ago, the Royal Academy of Music, at the suggestion, we believe, of Mr. Lucas, took it from the shelves of the Philharmonic, and caused the pupils to practise it. The Academy Orchestra was then (why not now, Mr. Potter?) a fine one, and we well remember the delight we experienced on seeing announced in one of the Concert bills, "Spohr's Symphony in D minor - composed for and dedicated to (and shelved by, omitted-) the Philharmonic Society," We flew to the Hanover Square Rooms on the day of the Concert, and our warmest anticipations - anticipations created by having heard at various intervals, Snatches of the Symphony on the pianoforte, were more than realised - We were enchanted! - "now," thought we, "the public have had an opportunity of hearing this master piece of a composer for whom they express so much reverence; now, we shall have many opportunities of hearing it again, since its unfame, has only been the result of its unpublicity." - But how wofully were we disappointed when, having subscribed for two successive seasons, to the Royal Academy Concerts, and annually to the Philharmonic, this matchless work was never once repeated! We began to despair, and from sheer chagrin, took to fairly abusing the oft repeated E flat symphony, feeling as we felt, the greatly superior attractions of its lovlier but neglected sister. A fairer dawn however was destined to arrive. We had the inexpressible pleasure of hearing the D minor twice in one season! Once at the Philharmonic, where it was performed, and received with classical frigidity, and once at the First Concert of our distinguished young artist Mr. W.S. Bennett (with whom it has ever been an especial favorite), where it was executed and applauded with a warmth and enthusiasm worthy its supreme merits. Since then, by the efforts of a few cultivated musicians who had the opportunity of hearing it, it has become very generally known, though still a dead letter at the Philharmonic, (like Mendelssohn's symphony in A major, also written expressly for them, equal in beauty and rivalling in neglectful obscurity and chef d'œuvre of Spohr) and now to give completeness to its celebrity, Messrs. Wessel and Stapleton have had the judicious discrimination to insert /it/ in their admirable selection of orchestral compositions, arranged as piano duets, well known as the "Bibliothèque Classique." Ten years ago, we should have found it necessary to make our readers acquainted with the merits

> of this remarkable work by an elaborate analysis, but thanks to the persevering efforts of a few devoted music lovers, such a labour is wholly uncalled for, and we need only give our entire approbation to the absolute perfection of the arrangement. D.[43]

That Davison's opinion of the Second Symphony was shared by the majority of his fellow critics is shown by reviews of its performance at the Philharmonic Society on April 18 1842, where it was given in place of the Seventh Symphony, the première of which had to be postponed for various reasons. The possibility that the choice of the Second Symphony as a replacement may have been influenced by Davison's complaints about its unaccountable neglect cannot be overlooked.

Naturally Taylor, in The Spectator, was enthusiastic. He described the symphony as one of Spohr's 'most perfect and finished efforts', and he dilated at length on the difference between Beethoven's and Spohr's approach to music, saying:

> Music is the language in which such men speak, and their sinfonias especially indicate the cast of their thoughts. This is apparent in the two sinfonias of the present scheme /i.e. Beethoven 7 & Spohr 2/ ... Each is a work of an original mind, and they admit of no comparison. The pleasure they afford is of a totally different kind, and neither can fill up the gap which the loss of the other would create. Romberg's sinfonia of a previous night was a reminiscense rather than a creation; it was Mozart or Haydn at second hand. If lost we should still possess the originals, and the treasury of music would be none the poorer. Not so with Beethoven, and not so with Spohr: lose either, and there is a void which nothing else can supply; our musical exchequer is to this extent impoverished. The sinfonias of the former are better known, and therefore better understood: to the latter we have never yet heard complete justice done by any English orchestra.[44]

The Atlas was equally impressed by the work, and, while not indulging in direct comparisons, its opinions tally well with those of Taylor and Davison.

It avowed that the symphony was

> 'The most lovely and perfect orchestral work of Spohr...It is, altogether a product of its school carried out to a higher perfection than, as we believe, that school has ever elsewhere attained; and as a wonderful specimen of its style of art, a triumph of its composer's genius, a study for the many that admire him, and a

> check on his detractors, it should have a frequent place in the programmes of these concerts where only, in this country, full effect can be given to its prodigious beauties.[45]

The Musical World felt that it was 'as fresh and beautiful as ever... it has scarcely a fault', and noted that it was 'received with a warmth which we trust will induce the powers that be, to make it an annual feature at the Philharmonic'.[46] Even Chorley was constrained to praise the symphony though in contrast to Taylor, who had used it as an opportunity to exalt Spohr's work in general, Chorley took it as a chance to indulge in his favourite pastime of damning with faint praise, and to launch another critical dart against the Seventh Symphony which it had replaced in the programme. He observed:

> We are disposed to prefer Spohr's symphony in D minor... to most of his orchestral works. So long as he is contented to move along the level of straightforward composition, and when he lights upon a main idea or two which are fresh, his knowledge of instruments, his rich harmonies, his individualities of form and colour rarely fail to produce an engaging effect. The scherzo of the symphony in question is the most playful movement, of its class, we remember from his hand: too generally, like Rogers's boarding-school girls, he is 'serious when he dances.' The finale, too, is happy and graceful in its melodies, though they are too unsparingly wrought; and its close is deficient in climax, and, consequently, in excitement... this work...was given instead of the rapsody on Terrestrial and Celestial Life, /i.e. Symphony no. 7/ tried a few weeks since...we cannot but say that such a piece of intelligible writing as was performed on Monday, is worth a score of such muddy mysteries as the new work in question; where the master, deserting his own domain of sense and fact, attacks the poet's fairy-land of Imagination.[47]

Chorley was not alone, however, in having reservations about the validity of treating subjects such as Irdisches und Göttlisches im Menschenleben in music. Just as in 1835 many had been sceptical about the possibility and propriety of illustrating the poem Die Weihe der Töne in a symphony, so, some eight years later, the same doubts were expressed about the Seventh Symphony. But the situation was different in several respects. Most importantly, Spohr's reputation was much better established, and the Fourth Symphony, if not yet accepted as the great masterpiece that it was later held to be, was beginning to gain supporters. On the other hand the Seventh

Symphony seemed to be attempting to use music to express an even more intangible idea than its predecessor; Chorley had been able to accept the one but not the other: also it came in the wake of the total failure of its immediate predecessor, the Historical Symphony. In these circumstances the initial reaction of The Musical World was cautious when it announced that the Philharmonic Society directors had 'received a communication from Spohr, respecting a new characteristic symphony which he has just completed, and which will be given in the course of the approaching series of concerts'. It continued:

> The symphony is written for double orchestra, and is meant to describe the spiritual and material of human existence, a very metaphysical subject, and for musical treatment a most speculative one, which to us rather shews the want of a better, than promises any great field for expression in itself. Upon the mere supposition of what the present work may not be, we regret that Spohr who has achieved so vastly much with the legitimate means, and in the natural provinces of his art, should condescend to fritter away his great genius upon orchestral experiment and apparently indescribable characteristics; but he who has achieved vastly much is the person alone to wage novel adventures, and despite the failure of the Historical Symphony at the Philharmonic - albeit, no criterion of its want of merit - we are determined to suppose that anything upon which the author of the Symphony in D minor, and the overture to "Faust" has spent his imagination, may be a worthy production of the first musician of his age.[48]

As the time for its performance drew closer, interest grew, and The Musical World printed a translation of an article by Schumann on the symphony, prefaced by the following editorial remarks:

> The following account of a work which has already created a considerable sensation, will, it is presumed, be read with interest; especially as the Directors of the Philharmonic, have appointed a trial night, on Wednesday next, expressly for the getting up of the symphony.

The warmth of Schumann's enthusiasm for the work could not have failed to increase anticipation even further; he concluded his piece with a hearty tribute, saying:

> An intention develops itself in music as in poetry; in these compositions of Spohr it dictates itself in the noblest loudest manner; therefore honour to the great German master.[49]

The first phrase of this sentence provides an apt, if unintentional, rebuke to Chorley's criticism (p. 128above), in fact, Chorley and the other critics who

doubted the power of music to render such poetic conceptions successfully no longer had the field almost entirely to themselves, as had been the case when Die Weihe der Töne had been introduced seven years earlier. Curiously, Chorley seems to have liked being in the minority, for in 1835 he had been one of the few critics wholeheartedly in support of Spohr's first programme symphony; now he could be found claiming that

> the high metaphysical subtleties of such a theme, however they be present to the artist's mind while occupied in the labour of composition, could by no one - not even a Beethoven - be satisfactorily expressed through such a medium of communication so as to reach the prosaic many, or even the poetical few.[50]

There is little doubt that in his objections to the symphony Chorley was more in tune with the attitudes of the majority towards the musical tendencies which it embodied. There was still a substantial body of conservative opinion unsympathetic towards Romantic developments of this kind, and their views are probably reflected fairly accurately by the writer of an article on 'Musical Composition and Performance in Europe' which appeared in The Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review. He maintained that

> Ries, Lachner, Lindpaintner, Marschner, and a tribe of meritorious elaborators...have been too often led into noisy or fragmentary mysticism when they aimed at sublimity... The baneful effect of these strainings in place of natural efforts, has even reached a master as substantive and worthy as Spohr. Seduced by the popularity which he imagined Romanticism was gaining, and too mistrustful to commit the genuine creations of his own thought and fancy to futurity, he has been led of late to attempt the rhapsodical, the descriptive and the mysterious in composition, as if he had been impelled towards it by his demon.[51]

However, Taylor noted that for the symphony's performance at the Philharmonic concert on May 30 'the expectation it had excited drew an unusually large audience',[52] but it seems probable that many were disappointed, for Chorley remarked that 'it fell dead on the ear, in spite of the admiration which its nicety of construction must demand'.[53] As had so often been the case in the past, the inference to be drawn from the reviews is that there was a much more pronounced enthusiasm for the work among musicians than among the generality of listeners. The same zeal on the part of the orchestra as had

been apparent at Norwich in 1839 is evident in the case of this symphony, for The Musical World observed at the time of its first trial by the Philharmonic that 'The orchestra, under the able conductorship of M. Moscheles, seemed enthusiastic in their desire to render justice to the intentions of the Master'.[54] The lack of what they deemed a just appreciation of Spohr's genius was commented on by some of the most committed of the symphony's protagonists. Taylor spent the greater part of his review of the performance justifying the work's intentions and chiding the deficient judgement of its critics, asserting:

> He who ventures beyond the beaten path in music must not expect, at least in England, to be attended with a crowd of followers. Viewed as a mere musician, Spohr's course is not to be tracked by the crowd. His harmonies are the study and the admiration of the most accomplished artists: to the many they present merely an assemblage of sounds which produce a novel effect upon the ear. But regarded as the poet of his art, fewer still will be able to follow him, or understand that exquisite sense of beauty and power that cannot be contained within itself - that is impatient of all limit - that strives to link itself to some other image of beauty or grandeur, and to enshrine itself in the highest forms of fancy... Among English musicians, properly so called, there will be, and we believe there is, but one feeling towards this composition, simply regarded as a work of art. They will feel with the judicious critic of the Morning Chronicle, that "it is a work worthy of its author's great name, though one which it would be rash and presumptious to criticize on a single hearing." Other, and less competent, judges will probably give a bolder opinion, and probably the wholly incompetent the boldest.[55]

Davison was still more scathing in an article contributed to The Musical World as part of 'A series of essays, analytic, illustrative, explanatory and critical, on the works of eminent composers, ancient and modern', which went under the title of 'The Estimator'. His discussion of the symphony occupied seven closely packed columns containing more poetic flights of fancy than the work it was meant to be analysing, and it concluded:

> Such are the melancholy impressions to which I am subject under the influence of this, in my opinion, fine musical poem, the masterpiece of one of the greatest musicians that the world has produced - the artistic triumph of the illustrious Spohr, which I fear has been but little understood in this country - and I anticipate for a long period must remain so. When the critics of the day have resigned their pens, and have ceased

> to deal out delusions as monstrous as unmeaning - as absurd, an unartistic - as unpoetical, as commonplace - as flippant, as shallow - as meagre and inventionless, as erroneous and besotted - when their places are taken by wiser men, and better musicians, and truer poets, and sounder thinkers, WHEN ARTISTS SHALL DISCOURSE OF ART, AND AMATEURS LISTEN WITH RESPECT - then and not till then, will the deep meaning of such metaphysical works as this symphony of Spohr be properly communicated to the multitude.[56]

Davison's fears were well founded, for, despite the wholehearted enthusiasm of a few, the symphony was seldom performed in England; so seldom that even Chorley felt it would have been a 'welcome substitution'[57] for the Historical Symphony at the Philharmonic in 1846.

There is further evidence that in 1842 there was still considerable public resistance to some of Spohr's large-scale orchestral works. When Die Weihe der Töne was given by the Societa Armonica on June 6, for instance, The Musical World observed:

> The great symphony of Spohr is a formidable effort for an orchestra not essentially potent in string instruments... there is...a certain anti-climax in this fine composition which seems to fade and die as it draws to a close; a circumstance that renders it very unapplaudable by a mixed audience, many of whom are more easily won by sound than sense...upon the whole the symphony went off rather flatly.[58]

(It should be noted that the phrase 'anti-climax' is used here in a strictly descriptive sense, referring to the gentle pianissimo ending of the last movement, not as a criticism.) The implication is that a combination of deficiency of performance and lack of sophistication among the audience contributed to the symphony's relative failure on this occasion. It seems to have been a different story with works that had been played often enough and well enough to have insinuated themselves into public favour, such as the overture to Jessonda, for Taylor observed of its performance at the fifth Philharmonic concert of the season that:

> Spohr's splendid overture to Jessonda narrowly escaped an encore. The band are reluctant to respond to a call which a singer eagerly obeys, and are averse to form a precedent from which no individual advantage or glory results, and which only serves to keep them an additional ten minutes in the orchestra.[59]

A similar observation was made the following year of the overture to Der

Berggeist given at the Philharmonic on April 3 1843, of which it was commented: 'Spohr's overture would have been encored had it not been placed at the end of an act'.[60] Further indication of this can be found in reviews of his overture Pietro von Abano, given at the Gentlemen's Concerts in Manchester in 1841. At a concert in August it was said that the overture was 'rather confused, and wanted more rehearsing; however, we shall be glad to have it again, as we do not venture to condemn the work of so great a master on one hearing'.[61] Given again a month later all obscurity in the work was banished, and the critic noted that 'Spohr's overture "Pietro von Abano", was very effective, and played à la merveille'.[62] The overture seems to have become quite a favourite in Manchester at about this time for it was performed again at the Gentlemen's concerts the following January.

Many others of Spohr's smaller scale compositions were enjoying similar success outside London. The Eighth Violin Concerto, included in Rohlff's Benefit at Norwich in 1840 was enthusiastically hailed, the critic exclaiming:

> Of Spohr's grand dramatic scena for the violin we can hardly speak in terms of sufficient praise; it is a truly splendid and unique composition.[63]

At the Devon and Exeter Quartet Concerts in January 1842 the reviewer relished 'Spohr's beautiful quartet in A minor',[64] and at the same concerts in March his Duo Concertante op.113 received very high praise, the reviewer concluding 'it is a very lovely composition. With the exception of Beethoven's op.47, we do not recollect a Duet that has given us so much pleasure'.[65]

In London, too, the quartet concerts were showing how effective Spohr's chamber music could be when well played, and the quartet op.82 no. 2 was warmly received, judging by a review in The Musical World which commented:

> Spohr's very delightful quartet in G was very excellently played - the scherzo in the style of a Spanish Bolero, in particular, had a novel and brilliant effect, and was demanded for repetition...the whole Quartet is a striking specimen, alike, of the genius and masterly art of the composer; by the latter of which he was contrived to give to the first violin part, all the brilliancy of a solo without its obtrusiveness, a desideratum not frequently accomplished by Quartet writers...the Quartet...awoke a desire to hear it again and enjoy it more fully.[66]

A similar appreciation of his vocal music, which seems to have been almost ubiquitous at this time, is apparent in many reviews. At the Devon and Exeter Quartet Concerts in November 1841 the duet 'Fairest maiden' from Jessonda was described as 'the greatest treat in the vocal department';[67] at the Society of British Musicians in January 1843 'With grief oppressed', from op.103, earned the title 'Spohr's delicious concertante';[68] and at T.M. Mudie's second concert in May 1843 'Segui o cara' from Faust and 'Night's lingering shades' from Azor and Zemira were categorised respectively as 'Spohr's exquisite duo', and 'magnificent trio';[69] while at the Philharmonic concert on June 5 'Stille noch dies Wuthverlangen' from Faust created a great effect, the critic noting that 'Spohr's superb aria was unanimously encored, a compliment richly deserved both by composer and singer'.[70]

In the field of oratorio, too, it seems that Spohr continued to command wide public enthusiasm, as reactions to the performance of The Last Judgement by the Sacred Harmonic Society in 1841 demonstrate. The Spectator observed that it was 'the first oratorio of the greatest living composer' and that:

> Spohr in his quiet, happy home, far removed from courtly or popular influences, and incited only by an unshaken fidelity to the highest interests of his art, commits his inspirations to the care of the universal public. They are left to make their own way, and they do make it. There needs no other proof of their sterling excellence than this fact.[71]

The Times confirms that the audience had appreciated it, commenting: 'The entire performance...was listened to with great delight and frequent applause'.[72] The Musical World's notice is interesting, revealing that there was still a feeling that the music was in some way 'difficult'. It observed that it was:

> a work which, though entirely differing from the conventional style of sacred music, possesses so many peculiar beauties of its own as to commend and fix the attention of the audience, whenever such audience possesses sufficient musical discernment to appreciate the truly beautiful without regard to styles and prejudices.[73]

Clearly not everyone agreed wholeheartedly with this viewpoint; the writer in The Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review who had criticised Spohr's

excursions into the field of programme music was similarly equivocal about his oratorios, but he seems to have been devoted to Handel and lamented what he saw as the lack of originality in contemporary attempts at oratorio. After dismissing Mendelssohn's St Paul with faint praise he commented:

> Spohr...does his best to produce novelty in his sacred dramas; but he has only a small number of vocal effects at command, and they were long ago given to "Faust," "Jessonda," and "Zemire and Azor," with one exception- the alternation of unaccompanied quartet and chorus which he has applied so happily in his "Last Judgement." As often as he attempts to become descriptive, he becomes trite, overwrought, and after all remains far behind the picture-music of Handel. We know of no other German composer in whom an attempt at originality is discernable.[74]

As the last sentence shows, however, there did not seem, apart from Mendelssohn, to be any challengers in the field. It was only from one or other of the two of them that a major oratorio could be expected and it was with considerable interest, therefore, that the news of Spohr's having completed a third oratorio, The Fall of Babylon, for performance at the 1842 Norwich Festival was received.

A preliminary rehearsal of the new work took place at the Hanover Square rooms towards the end of 1841 and The Spectator averred: 'It is an effort of genius of the highest order and in every way worthy of its illustrious author'.[75] Spohr himself was to have come over to direct the oratorio at Norwich, but in the event was refused leave of absence by his employer, the Prince of Hesse. Some idea of the esteem in which he was now held can be gained from the efforts made to persuade the Hessian government to relent. Lord Aberdeen had instituted moves through the British embassy in Frankfurt and when these failed the Duke of Cambridge wrote personally to the Prince in the most pressing terms. When this, too, failed the citizens of Norwich sent an enormous signed petition, which met with an equal lack of success. It may be noted in passing that at this time Spohr seriously considered resigning his post at Kassel in view of continued petty annoyances and was only dissuaded from accepting the directorship of the Prague Conservatoire by consideration for his wife, whose family all lived in Kassel.

Even those who, like Chorley, were not to be numbered among Spohr's greatest admirers were up in arms about this treatment of the composer and many of the newspapers set aside space to belabour the Prince, whom Chorley referred to contemptuously as 'Him of Hesse'.[76] Even Punch indulged in a touch of satire on the subject, remarking:

> The Elector of Hesse-Cassel - magnanimous potentate! would not suffer Spohr to visit Norwich, to preside at the performance of his Fall of Babylon. The Elector has, with proper spirit, followed up this measure with a decree that, upon pain of death, no nightingale is to listen to its own music within his vast dominions.[77]

As the time for the Festival approached, however, such matters were overshadowed by the air of anticipation which the impending performance created. The forces assembled at Norwich were impressive. The orchestra consisted of 22 first violins, 20 second, 20 violas, 10 celli, 10 double basses, quadruple woodwind, horns and trumpets, 6 trombones, 2 ophicleides and timpani, containing the bulk of the Philharmonic orchestra; the chorus numbered 268. The daily reports of the festival which appeared in The Times convey the unmistakable enthusiasm of everyone concerned. This critic noted that at the rehearsal on September 12

> The most earnest and eager attention were at once visible in the band, as they prepared to give its first audible existence to this work of Spohr.

And he observed that

> Many professors and amateurs attracted by the high reputation of the festival, and especially by the approaching performance of the Fall of Babylon, have signified their intention of being present.[78]

The following day he reported:

> we have conversed with professors of eminence who have come from very distant parts of Her Majesty's dominions in order to hear the first performance of The Fall of Babylon.[79]

The extraordinary scenes on the morning of the performance in St Andrew's Hall were graphically described in The Morning Herald. Its critic commented:

> Spohr's Fall of Babylon was expected to be attended by a very numerous audience, but no one anticipated the actual result. At an early hour this morning, carriages began to drive into Norwich filled with the beauty and fashion of the county; the doors were

> thronged with anxious visitants more than an hour before the period for opening them; and in less than half an hour after they were opened there was not even standing room to be obtained. The area, the galleries, the aisles and the passages were all occupied; and wherever a foot could be placed, there were seen some adventurous wights perched, and that frequently in the most hazardous situations, perfectly contented to suffer all the unpleasantness and inconvenience of his position, rather than forgo the pleasure of hearing the first performance of Spohr's oratorio. Many persons climbed upon the roof, some getting within-side the windows, and sitting on the sills, while others remained without and looked from their giddy height upon the crowd below. This is no exaggeration, but a literal fact; and that such interest should be excited in a provincial town upon the performance of a new musical work is, perhaps, a circumstance unequalled in the annals of music.[80]

The Times concurred, saying: 'Such a scene, we learn, never occurred at any preceding festival, such was the expectation excited, and such the homage paid to genius'.[81] There were, in fact, 2000 people in the hall, while another 500 were turned away at the door.

The papers seem to have vied with each other in their praise of the oratorio. The Morning Chronicle asserted that 'The genius of Spohr has this day achieved its greatest triumph in England', and concluded its account of the performance of the oratorio with the assertion that

> Its music is characterised by all the greatness of Spohr's genius, and by his peculiarities of manner; but the traits of genius, as well as the peculiarities of manner, I must reserve till another opportunity; and in the meantime I shall only venture to say that the Fall of Babylon is the greatest work of its class that has appeared since the days of Handel.[82]

The Times was hardly less extravagant, crowning its long and highly laudatory account with the statement: 'It is the work of a master of his art and worthy to rank with the Last Judgement and the Crucifixion. This is an emphatic eulogy, but it is a merited one.' The critic further observed:

> By what we have heard this morning our store of musical ideas and of musical gratification is enlarged, and we are made experimentally to feel that the springs and resources of the art are not exhausted, but that the command of a power like that of Spohr they will be ever fresh and flowing. It was curious to observe the conduct of the London performers, whose habit is usually to hasten from the orchestra at the last bar of a performance. This morning congratulations were passing all around, as if for the achievement of some great triumph; every

> countenance was lighted up with pleasure and they lingered in the orchestra to give vent to the feeling of gratification and pride which everyone felt who took part in the performance.[83]

A box full of similar reports of the festival was sent to Spohr in Kassel as some compensation for his forced absence.

There were a few accounts which were less uncritically enthusiastic, as, for instance, the one in The Musical World,[84] but here, too, the high level of respect for the composer is conspicuous. Clearly, however, the stream of superlatives which had been showered on the oratorio led to a certain amount of cynicism among those who were less enthralled by Spohr's music, and Chorley reported with relish the 'laconic character given by one of the shrewdest and most dispassionate thinkers of the day. "It has been violently overpraised, it will be unjustly abused and then quietly forgotten."'[85]

But for the time being there seems to have been little diminution in the tremendous impact which the work was making. Given again at Manchester in December, under Taylor's baton, it elicited the comment that 'On the whole this was certainly one of the finest musical performances ever heard in Manchester'.[86] Nor was the enthusiasm which the oratorio raised any less striking when it was given at Exeter Hall under the composer's baton in the following July. Reactions in London, however, must be examined in the total context of Spohr's visit in 1843.

The Visit of 1843

The London season of 1843 was marked by the production of a tremendous amount of press material on Spohr and his works. It is safe to say that interest in Spohr was the dominant feature of the musical life of the metropolis during that season. Anticipation was growing for some weeks before Spohr's arrival. In May a correspondent wrote to The Musical World from Penzance desiring to know when Spohr was to arrive, as he desired very much to 'see this great man'.[87] Shortly afterward the journal published a letter from

Edward Taylor announcing Spohr's impending arrival, with the comment: 'We publish this, well aware how welcome the news it contains will be to every lover of music'.[88] The general tone of the visit is well summed up at the beginning of the Times review of the eighth Philharmonic concert, where it was asserted that 'The invitation of Dr Spohr by the directors will render this season an epoch in the musical history of the country'.[89] Most of the leading newspapers and periodicals expressed much the same sentiment throughout his stay. Even Chorley could not avoid extending 'a hearty welcome to one whose life has been as honourable as his diligence in Art has been great';[90] though his choice of the world 'diligence' clearly implies the limit of his admiration. In fact, he alone of musical journalists indulged in trenchant criticism of Spohr's music. Any reservations which may have existed in other quarters as to Spohr's senior position in the musical pantheon seem not to have been expressed in print, and such minor criticisms of particular works as were occasionally voiced were made in a way that left his overall greatness unchallenged. Certainly press opinions of The Fall of Babylon were less uncritical than they had been at Norwich but despite the severe criticisms of the work in Chorley's review of the Hanover Square performance on July 7, even he began by calling it 'the great work of a great composer'.[91] If the press showed less enthusiasm for the oratorio, however, the public did not; their reaction was quite as ecstatic when it was given at Exeter Hall on July 21 as it had been at Norwich.

In general, too, the enthusiasm of many of the press reports during his visit bordered on the extravagant, and in some cases overstepped the mark of normal admiration. This is particularly true of several of the articles which can confidently be attributed to J.W. Davison. For example, on the evening of his arrival on June 26, Spohr attended a 'conversazione' given by Sterndale Bennett, where Davison set eyes on Spohr for the first time. He described the experience at length in a leading article in The Musical Examiner, saying:

> Spohr has come among us. What associations does this honoured name awake in the bosom of every true artist! Spohr - the great Spohr - the composer of the Power of

> Sound and the Last Judgement, is in England - in London - in the midst of us all...Spohr whom we have hitherto regarded as a dream - as an ideal being - as something intangible, wrapped in a cloud, and visible only to the mind's eye, which pierces all obscurity - he, Spohr, sat before us...[92]

An editorial in The Musical World gave a more rational appreciation of Spohr, and while it had no hesitation in placing him in the very highest class, it obliquely drew attention to the inequality of his output though rather to forestall those critics who might base their detractions on the weaknesses of particular works than as indicating a serious flaw in his genius. It observed that:

> Dr Spohr, like Cherubini, is a witness to his own admittance into the realms of classical immortality. His writings take their station among the masterpieces of Bach, Handel Gluck. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber and Cherubini. They have long enjoyed that distinction and nothing can now remove them from the rock upon which they are fixed...their influence will survive until art is on its death-bed. We will not attempt at this time to classify and separate them, or to say which of them is ephemeral, (for some of them assuredly are so), and which will endure for ever; - suffice it, Dr Spohr has created that which can only be forgotten when Time shall be carried to his grave in eternity.[93]

On June 27 Spohr attended a meeting of the aristocratic Catch Club and on June 29 the Melodists, the first of many such engagements during his stay. In fact, while it is impossible to trace all these events, it is clear that he was given hardly a moment to himself, being constantly invited as guest of honour to 'musical entertainments and dinner parties...at the greater part of which he himself took an active share in the performances'.[94] Perhaps the most extraordinary event of this kind was a gargantuan musical entertainment given to an invited audience of some fifty people on July 2 by Mr Alsager, city editor of The Times. This consisted entirely of Spohr's music, beginning at 2.00 p.m. with the First Double Quartet, the Quintet for piano and wind (with Moscheles as pianist), the Second Double Quartet, and the Nonet. Then followed a 'Dejeuner a la fourchette' at 5.00 p.m. and a 'second act' at 7.00 p.m., consisting of a String Quintet the Octet and the Third Double Quartet. This remarkable tribute was, in the words of the

Autobiography, 'in every respect successful, and got up with princely magnificence' and 'must have been the more gratifying to Spohr, when he saw how the company listened until late in the evening with admirable perseverance and wrapped /sic/ attention to his tones without evincing the least sign of weariness'.[95]

His first official engagement was the Philharmonic rehearsal on July 1. He was always especially popular with his fellow musicians, and the orchestra had signed an address expressing their pleasure at being conducted by him and offering their services free for a performance of The Fall of Babylon. On his appearance in the room he was greeted with 'a welcome of the most cordial and thoroughly English kind'.[96] The Philharmonic concert took place on July 3. In it Spohr played his Concertino in E major, and conducted his overture Der Alchymist, his symphony Die Weihe der Töne, and a duet from Jessonda. The Morning Chronicle noted that:

> the crowded room contained almost every one at all distinguished in the musical world. The utmost curiosity was felt to see the illustrious veteran who now stands foremost among living musicians.[97]

The Times described his reception by the audience, saying:

> He was received nobly. At his first appearance all present commenced clapping their hands, but as if feeling that this was too ordinary an acknowledgement, they rose in a body and thus cheered the venerable composer.[98]

Spohr had not appeared before the London public as a violinist since 1820, and in the meantime he had virtually given up performing in public; nevertheless, it seems that his playing was generally appreciated by the audience, who were so impressed at one point by a superbly executed staccato passage that they applauded loudly in the middle of the piece. However, the impression gained from some reviews is that his playing was found to be more polished than exciting. The Illustrated London News observed:

> As to Spohr's concerto there was evidently more reverence for the composer than for the instrumentalist: we have been accustomed of late years to startling effects; and it is not easy to fall back upon tameness and quietude, however "pure and holy."[99]

Other critics were more appreciative, clearly not sharing their colleague's

view that Spohr ought to have astounded the audience with technical fireworks. The Musical World felt that his playing was 'in the highest degree finished and artist like',[100] and The Times that 'in all respects the most fastidious tastes must have been gratified by it'.[101] Curiously, The Musical World's only reservation was that he was 'deficient in tone'[102] while The Illustrated London News made particular mention of his 'very powerful tone'.[103] Chorley seems to have felt that his performance left something to be desired technically, observing that he was 'subject to Time, who revenges himself for adding to the artist's experience, by impairing his mechanical powers'; but even he was compelled to confess that 'For purity of taste, and exquisite measurement of time, M. Spohr's performance is still admirable, and should be long remembered by our rising violinists, if such there be'.[104] The Musical World simply answered any objections to his performance with the terse comment: 'The assertion of some of the newspaper critics, that he has lost his power as a violinist, proves that they have very little notion of what violin playing should be'.[105]

The undoubted high point of the evening, however, was the performance of Die Weihe der Töne under its composer's direction. The Times described it rapturously as 'a wonderful composition, which will sustain comparison with the highest works of the class, displaying a boundless invention and variety of character almost endless'.[106] The second movement was unanimously encored and it is clear that, encouraged by the presence of the composer the audience's enthusiasm was thoroughly aroused. Several reviewers pointed out that under the composer's own highly efficient direction the work had been properly performed for the first time in England. Chorley commented:

> As a conductor, his command of his forces remains without a drawback, as all felt who remembered former Philharmonic essays at the Symphony in question. He absolutely brought the players to a pianissimo, hitherto as fabulous a thing among them as the Unicorn; thus imparting to the first allegro an exquisite and fanciful delicacy, without which one half of its import is lost.[108]

With reference to the second movement, The Musical World remarked: 'We trembled for its well-going, but Spohr wielded the baton, and it went to the

nicest possible perfection'.[109] In fact, even after the baton had been in general use in England for a decade, Spohr's firm direction was a revelation, and The Musical World asserted that it 'proved what an immense addition to the strength of an orchestra is an efficient conductor', adding that 'Dr Spohr, as a conductor, has no rival, except his only rival among living composers - Dr Mendelssohn'.[110] Chorley agreed that 'the decided superiority of such a performance as Monday's should at once destroy the confidence of the Philharmonic band in its own unassisted powers, and stimulate our conductors to a strictness which many of them are too apt to regard as absurd'.[111] After the performance of The Fall of Babylon on July 21 The Morning Chronicle further observed of his conducting:

> Without apparent effort - without gesticulation, without bustle - he has the art of conveying his meaning to every member of the orchestra in a manner which is hardly to be mistaken. No performer who attends to the movements of such a conductor can ever be at a loss. But, unfortunately, such conductors are few; the common fashion being, to flourish a great deal when everything is going smoothly, and the moment a difficulty occurs to leave the band to shift for itself.[112]*

All the critics were agreed that Die Weihe der Töne, given such a performance, must be regarded as a very great work, but there still remained a few points at which reservations existed. Of these perhaps the most persistent was the old objection to its programmatic intentions. The critic of The Morning Chronicle disliked the ode on which the symphony was based and probably disliked programme music in general, for he commented: 'not only he but other composers of the highest class have often overstrained the descriptive powers of music'. He felt that the first movement was only tenuously connected with its subject and could 'as well apply to fifty other subjects'. 'Next time,' he remarked, 'we shall throw away its programme and ode to sound, and enjoy its beauties as a musical composition'.[113]

* There seems to have been a good deal of disapproval of exaggerated conducting, as is indicated by Sir George Smart's remarks about Liszt's conducting at the Bonn Festival of 1845, where he remarked on 'a new cantata by Liszt - conducted (with plenty of twisting of the person) by himself'. /Smart Papers, British Library dept. of manuscripts, Add.41776, p. 16/

The Spectator took a somewhat different view, but this critic's*comments also suggest other grounds of objection to the work. He averred:

> It will not be denied that there are the marks of nationality as well as individuality in this Sinfonia; it is the offspring of a German mind, as well as the reflection of the mind of Spohr. Many English hearers are thus disabled from participating in the full enjoyment of a work which partakes largely of the German character; and although its prominent beauties must reveal themselves to every hearer, they are unable to go with the composer pari-passu... We are not disposed with our brother of the Chronicle to burn the ode next time we hear the Sinfonia. To a work of this sort such a key is absolutely necessary.[114]

But there is no doubt of this critic's own appreciation of the symphony for he concluded his review of it with the comment:

> Such is a faint and feeble outline of this great work; a work which, if not pregnant with poetry of the highest order, we have yet to learn what poetry is.

The symphony's partisans were very strong in support of it, perhaps the more so because of the feeling that there were still lingering objections in some quarters. One of its most forceful advocates was the writer of an article which appeared in The Musical Examiner and, a few weeks later, in The Musical World; this was almost certainly J.W. Davison. His position was unequivocally stated in the opening sentence:

> This symphony may be considered as one of the noblest creations of the human mind. The intention is deep and metaphysical, and the execution of that intention, masterly and splendid.

He went on to say of the first allegro:

> There are moments when we could think it the finest thing in all music, and at all times, as a matter of mere instrumentation, we must pronounce it matchless. Then its subject - so heavenly, so appropriate for the infancy of sound - how charmingly it colours the entire movement, what freshness it throws over it... All this is as perfect as anything we know - nothing more fresh or lovely ever came from pen of mortal - nothing!

After further effusions about the next movement, he referred to the March as being:

> next to the finale of the C minor of Beethoven the most exhilarating thing in the whole range of music.

The Trio he liked less, but the return of the March and the ensuing Song of

*No longer Taylor at this date.

Thanksgiving was able to

> restore us to the seventh heaven of music. The prayer for the dead, and the consoling beauty of the finale are beyond all praise. The only reproach to this last movement is its brevity.[115]

The result of this sort of advocacy and the generally powerful impression which the performance seems to have made, was the acceptance of the symphony as Spohr's orchestral masterpiece. It was soon being included in the classical part of Louis Jullien's Promenade Concerts, where, with the cheapest price of admission at one shilling, it must have become familiar to very many more people than could ever have heard it at the concerts of the Philharmonic or Societa Armonica. Moreover, whatever charges of charlatanism may have been levelled at Jullien, there is no doubt that his orchestra contained many very fine players and that it was efficiently directed.

The evening after the Philharmonic concert Spohr was guest of honour at a dinner held at the Crown and Sceptre, Greenwich, which was attended by almost a hundred musicians. Dr William Horsley was in the chair and others present included Moscheles, Benedict, Bishop, Sivori, Sterndale Bennett and Taylor. After he had responded to the toast in German, Spohr said that he would endeavour to reply in a language which was essentially theirs, and played a fantasia with Moscheles. Glees and songs were then sung by members of the company, and Moscheles concluded with an extempore fantasia on themes from Die Weihe der Töne. This dinner caused a flurry of criticism in certain sections of the press, and reasons for dissatisfaction varied according to the particular axe a complainant had to grind. Some, like 'Anti Humbug', complained because of what they saw as the exclusiveness of the establishment. He addressed the editor of The Musical World in the following terms:

> Sir, - The illustrious composer of the Last Judgement was invited on Tuesday, to a dinner at Greenwich, by a certain portion of the profession, who desire to have him all to themselves. I am glad of it for one thing, since it prevents the Philharmonic directors from getting Dr. Spohr in a corner, as was the case with Dr. Mendelssohn last year. But I cannot help thinking that such an affair should, by rights, have been got up by the real musicians of the profession, viz. the young composers, who never would have dreamed of placing Dr. Horsley in

> the chair, who I imagine, can have but very slight appreciation of the genius of Spohr, to judge from the tenor of his own works. This officious patronage of the great German, by a set of men utterly incapable of comprehending him, is at once absurd and presuming - but it reads the young musicians of England a good lecture, which their inertness and unpardonable lethargy richly deserve...[116]

A rather more sinister reason for the absence of young musicians was implied in The Britannia, where the writer, who according to The Musical World, was also critic of The Morning Post, commented

> It was remarked that,with the exception of Sterndale Bennett, the professors were all of the old school, and that the rising talent of England did not by its presence, assist in the testimonial to Spohr. As this matter has given rise to much conversation, it may be as well to explain the reason why the attendance was not larger than it was. It has been the misfortune of Spohr to be closely connected in this country with Professor Taylor of Gresham College. It has been frequently observed that men of little, or no talent themselves possess a sufficient quantum of impudence to obtain a reputation, such as it is, by associating themselves as the toadies and hangers-on of genius.[117]

The Musical World was broadly of the same opinion, considering that:

> amid all the ddight which the presence of Dr. Spohr has excited, and all the triumphs, public and private, the great German has obtained, one black spot has almost poisoned the hilarity of his visit to England - one blotch has scurvied the otherwise spotlessness of his welcome - viz. his connection with a certain professor... It is disgraceful that the most illustrious musician of Europe, a great and good man, stricken in years, and crowned with glory, should be thus made a mere prop for the tottering reputation of as thorough a harlequin as ever spat upon literature.[118]

The Illustrated London News, too, made a veiled reference to the affair in an article on Spohr, which concluded:

> Take him all in all he is a genius of the highest order; and we cannot but deplore that his reception in our hospitable land has been rendered equivocal by his supposed connection with "those who serve not to the name they bear." Quacks are the lowest order of the "profanum vulgus" and Spohr's motto ought to be "odi et arceo." [119]

The question of journalists' rivalries and the implications of the Taylor affair is examined in Appendix A; for the present it is sufficient to consider the direct influence which Spohr's association with Edward Taylor had on this visit. One minor result of the odium in which Taylor was held had been the use

of translations of Spohr's vocal works at the Philharmonic concert on July 3 which did not bear his name, but by far the most important effect was the astonishingly poor attendance at the performance of The Fall of Babylon given for the composer's benefit at Hanover Square on July 7. The Morning Post claimed that:

> it was pretty well known that Mr. E. Taylor was the director of the arrangements. This fact kept away a large number who would not, like some of the elder professors we recognised in the room, distinguish a German Spohr from a Norwich Taylor.[120]

The Musical World agreed, though it was felt that this was not the only cause of the poor attendance. The writer observed:

> Doubtless the Professor's connection with the affair prevented many a young musician from spending his half-guinea in the purchase of a ticket; - it prevented ourselves for one, - and several of our acquaintances. But there were other reasons against the success of the concert; half-guineas are not very plentiful now-a-days, and those that have them like to keep them. Three-shillingses, though scarce, are easier to be had, and are willinglier parted with. The Fall of Babylon should have been given at Exeter Hall, for Dr. Spohr's benefit, at the usual price of admission.[121]

At all events, the performance was musically if not financially successful. The Times described the composition as 'one uninterrupted series of beauties from beginning to end',[122] and The Morning Chronicle as 'a musical treat such as is rarely to be met with'.[123] The audience may have been small, but it was enthusiastic; Dr. Horsley stood up from among it at the end to exclaim 'Three cheers for the great master and the good man', which request was willingly acceded to. Nevertheless, a good deal of embarrassment was felt over the lack of support for the concert and a move was put on foot by other members of the profession to give another performance of the work, this time by the Sacred Harmonic Society, in the large concert-room of Exeter Hall. Spohr was at first reluctant to agree, since he had proposed to devote the remainder of his leave of absence to a trip to Wales. But when it was arranged that all preliminary rehearsals would be conducted while he was away, so that he only needed to take over at the last moment, he complied.

Before his departure for Wales, however, there remained one important event; that was an extra Philharmonic concert by Royal Command, at which he played his Concertino in A major and conducted the rest of the programme, including his overture Macbeth and Tristan's air from Jessonda, in which Staudigl was twice encored. This was the first time in its history that the monarch had attended a Philharmonic concert. Spohr was treated with great respect by the Queen, who clapped warmly upon his appearance and conversed with him

> for some time in a very flattering manner, and advised him during his further journey in England to travel incognito, otherwise in every town he would be annoyed and intruded on in the same manner as in London.[124]

Spohr and his wife set out on their projected journey on July 12 and were accompanied by Edward Taylor, 'in whom they found both a well-informed and amiable guide and companion'.[125] Clearly the internal squabbles of the London musical cliques did not unduly trouble them. They visited Winchester, Portsmouth, Southampton, Bath, Bristol, South Wales, Cheltenham and Oxford, and despite the attempt to travel incognito, his arrival soon became known in each town and he was received 'with the highest honours, upon which occasions many incidents occurred that either greatly amused or moved him'.[125]

On his return Spohr found all arrangements for the performance of his oratorio had been taken care of and, as his wife wrote in a letter home,

> at the grand rehearsal he was really much moved both with its excellent execution, and the conviction that such a number of persons totally stranger to him, and for the most part engaged in business (who in London have indeed but little leisure time) should have devoted their evenings to a late hour, during his absence of eight days, to the study of this difficult work, from pure love of it, and to afford him an agreeable surprise.[125]

The performance that evening was perhaps the greatest triumph of the visit. The attendance was in marked contrast to the Hanover Square performance. The Morning Chronicle referred to the 'most crowded audience we have ever seen assembled in Exeter Hall'.[126] The hall, which seated more than 3000, 'was

literally crammed to the very utmost; it seemed as though a single person more could not have stood within its walls'.[127] The Musical World, after describing it as 'a great national event', (see above p. 112) exclaimed rapturously:

> Spohr - the great Spohr - the immortal, while yet living, founder of a new feeling, if not of a new school in music, - Spohr, the mighty master, who has stamped upon the hearts of his contemporaries that impression to which we are rarely susceptible but through the medium of an age's authority, the comprehension of a man's merits - Spohr, whose name conveys more to the minds of those who feel its import than any words can signify, has been acknowledged by the people in a manner that does them, no less than him, the highest and the proudest honour.[127]

The performance was accompanied by 'tumultuous cheering that from time to time burst from the audience', and at the end of the oratorio, 'the people, at a loss to find a new and further way of expressing their rapture, demonstrated it more prominently by mounting upon the benches'.[128] According to The Musical Examiner the performance gave rise to 'an enthusiasm so unrestrainable that in our lives we cannot recall its parallel'.[129] The performance was followed by speeches and the presentation to Spohr of an engraved piece of plate.

The Times summed up the evening, and the whole visit, more calmly, but with an equal conviction of his greatness, saying:

> With this performance the visit of Dr. Spohr to London has terminated - a visit which will be a memorable one to the musical profession, and by all true lovers of art will be long adverted to with deep interest. No man living has indeed more genuine claims on their gratitude, or has done so much for the art as himself. Nothing is more striking in him than the great variety as well as the excellence of his productions. In his... compositions are to be found numerous examples which will live so long as music occupies the rank of an art and must circulate all over the civilised world.[130]

And The Morning Chronicle felt that:

> The result of this fine performance will doubtless be that The Fall of Babylon will become a "stock-piece" in this country. We shall not say it is the greatest of Spohr's works, but we believe it is calculated to be the most generally attractive.[131]

There was generally a feeling among the press that despite the enthusiasm of the audience The Fall of Babylon was, perhaps, not quite so great as it had

been pronounced to be after its first performance at Norwich, but nobody presumed to say that it was anything but a great work. The Musical World considered that 'Spohr has produced a work which, though inferior to his Crucifixion, is a noble effort of genius'.[132] The only radical objection to the work came from those who believed that it was 'not church music', a view which The Musical World combatted ably in a long article, commenting:

> We have indulged in this little discussion purely with the view of helping our readers to the formation of some accurate standard of criticism in such matters, and of sparing them the future confusion of works intended for the service of the church, with those merely designed to illustrate the historical portions of Scripture.[133]

Probably some objectors would, in any case, have considered all oratorio inadmissible, agreeing with the anonymous writer of a tract entitled Music & its influence, to be published in 1846, that nothing but the simplest hymn tune was an appropriate adjunct to religion. But since those who raised the question in relation to this particular oratorio had presumably heard the work, there must have been people who, while admitting the validity of oratorio, found The Fall of Babylon too redolent of the stage to accord with their apprehension of what religious music ought to be. Certainly Chorley based some of his criticisms on these grounds, commenting that:

> The subject is one of dramatic effect, rather than of spiritual elevation... The dignity essential to sacred composition has been lost sight of by Dr. Spohr. His Persians move in measures which recall the tinsel symbols of a stage pageant; his daughters of Zion suggest the timbrels and the dances of the Pagan ballet, in every note of their upspringing hope and cheefulness. The stupendous vision of the handwriting on the wall has elicited nothing beyond such blue-fire music as befits the cloister scene in 'Robert le Diable,' but which is painfully startling when employed in illustration of holy writ. In short, for German music the work is more secular than (for Italian) the graver parts of Rossini's 'Mose,' or the most mundane passages of his 'Stabat,' against which the idolaters of Spohr have railed by the hour.[134]

It seems quite likely that the reason why, in the long run, The Last Judgement retained its position as Spohr's most popular oratorio was that it offered less grounds for religious scruples than either of the others, rather than

that it was intrinsically better music. There were certainly a considerable number of musicians who shared Spohr's own opinion that Des Heilands letzte Stunden represented his finest achievement in the field, but against that work religious objections were even stronger than against The Fall of Babylon.

Spohr's departure, the day after the Exeter Hall performance, was marked by tokens of esteem similar to those which had attended him throughout his visit. According to his wife's account he was 'painfully moved' by his departure, but was not given time to brood, for he was besieged by a constant stream of well-wishers, while the many requests for his autograph 'kept him occupied at his writing table up to the time of his departure'. On the steamer he had barely remarked jokingly 'There is now indeed scarcely a lover of music in England who has not my autograph',[135] when a boat drew alongside carrying several gentlemen and numerous albums which had arrived too late; so he spent the rest of the journey down to Gravesend writing.

There is no doubt that, despite the lowering clouds of the Taylor affair, Spohr's visit had been a triumph. From almost every quarter he had been 'acknowledged as one of those immortal minds who shed undying glory upon their art'.[136] The general level of the reverence that was accorded him was such that it seems an almost incredible tribute to pay to a living musician. In fact, the point was frequently made that he must be seen as already occupying an unquestionable place in the line of great composers. According to The Morning Post, Dr Horsley had said in his speech at the Greenwich dinner that:

> His reputation ranked with the greatest genius of the present day and would take its position with that of past ages, with Bach, with Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, and other great men.[137]

Much the same point was made in The Musical World the following year when, in discussing the appointment to the Edinburgh chair of music, it asserted:

> A GREAT musician is the rarest accident of nature. Add one to this list who can:-
> Handel - Bach - Gluck - Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Cherubini, Weber, Spohr, Mendelssohn.
> From the beginning of music we find ten great musicians -

> which shows the infinite nature of art, and the immense difficulty of encompassing its mysteries.[138]

In the eyes of most critics only Mendelssohn, of other living musicians, could be placed on the same level as Spohr; opinions differed as to which should be given precedence over the other, but in print at least few were prepared to make too positive a judgement, and most were content simply to accept them both as the unchallengeable bearers of the sacred torch of legitimate composition.

Occasionally Mendelssohn was referred to in terms such as 'the most distinguished composer of the age',[139] as was the case in The Maestro in 1844. The writer was almost certainly Gruneisen, who seems never to have warmed to Spohr's music, but whose idolisation of Mendelssohn is shown by an editorial in the same journal.[140] But equally this sort of comment can be found applied to Spohr as is shown by passages already quoted. The only example of a direct comparison from this period which has come to light, in which a case for Mendelssohn's superiority is argued, is a long letter to the editor of The Musical World by G. French Flowers. He maintained of Spohr that 'though he may not rank with the greatest masters...yet, in my opinion, he comes immediately after Cherubini and Mendelssohn'; and he continued:

> Allowing that Spohr has equal genius with Mendelssohn, yet his works do not present such a variety of artistical points, and noble designs as are found in the writings of the latter composer. The characteristics of Spohr's harmonies(which are full of grace and beauty), consists chiefly in the discreet and varied use he makes of the chromatic scales, in his frequent modulations, particularly into minor modes, which must always create the softest emotions whenever they are heard; were his strength equal in producing astonishing plots and bold designs, then, perhaps, he might be placed before Mendelssohn; this composer, however, surpasses Spohr in this respect and his harmonies being more diatonic must necessarily give his music a more majestic and bold effect.[141]

It should be noted that French Flowers rated Cherubini higher than either of them, but nevertheless he fully endorsed the high position which each of them held in the ranks of great composers, saying:

> It is not unworthy of remark that Cherubini, Mendelssohn, and Spohr have each formed a school of music peculiar to

> himself, and no composer can claim so high a ground in the truly original, poetic, and scientific styles which characterise their splendid compositions.

In passing it may be observed that his very high estimation of Cherubini was somewhat eccentric and would not have received general concurrence; The Musical Examiner remarked that while often cited as a great composer, little of his music was familiar to the author (probably Davison) and that in frequent conversations with Mendelssohn on the subject of the great composers Cherubini had never been mentioned.[142]

Whenever a direct comparison was made between Spohr and Mendelssohn at this time it was invariably couched in the most respectful terms towards both of them, and Victorian regard for seniority generally induced writers to award Spohr the palm. Thus The Standard commented that Spohr 'may now, without injustice to the junior master, Mendelssohn, be recognised as the first instrumental composer of the day'.[143] The Atlas, in the enthusiasm engendered by Spohr's visit, canvassed a similar opinion at greater length and with a revealing analysis of the state of musical composition in Europe, saying that it was

> undeniably true that so few are they whose fame will endure after the manner of the great departed, that in Germany, France, and Italy combined, not more than six could be found who could visit us with claim on our affection. We say six as including the debatable celebrities of the continent; our own unflinching opinion is, that of all the continental musicians now living, there are but two whose works are destined to survive the vacillations of taste, and to combat unscathed with the assults of time. And if these men be really so few, let us the more rejoice that one of them has come among us. Spohr - we will not give him the conventional "M," nor his own proper "Herr," nor his academical "Doctor," - Spohr - whose works have incessantly enraptured us, have borne us with him in one hour through a long existence of passionate delight, have made us, nothing loth, weep with him or exult with him as he would, have taught us the dignity of music, and bid us reverence it as one of the few evidences of its own immortality which the soul of man is empowered to leave behind it on earth. Spohr - the illustrious, the high-purposed, the single minded Spohr - is among us breathing our air, walking our streets, eating with us, talking with us, and asking of us a welcome. Let it not be charged against us, that in thus seeking especially to commemorate his sojourn among us, we would unjustly exalt him above his great compatriot Mendelssohn. Far from it.

> we trust we have heart large enough for all worthy music, and for all its worthy creators. But we look on Mendelssohn as one who has grown up in our own era, - as one whose fame, though established, is not completed, - as one who, young and with time before him, shall, at the consummation of his labours, belong to the temples of the next generation. Spohr is now old; his days are fast approaching the number assigned to man; his fame has been ripening and ripe for near forty years. We regard him as the last remnant of that glorious band of moderns, which, beginning with Haydn, has proudly dubbed Germany the greatest musical country of the world. With him that era terminates; with Mendelssohn, distinguished by characters totally different from this last, but reviving much of the spirit of the penultimate, begins a new period of art, and, we trust and believe, one no less brilliant than any of its precursors. We think of Spohr, then, as of one already and surely canonized to immortality. We hail his presence as we should that of Haydn, or Mozart, or Beethoven.[144]

Writing from the Bonn Festival two years later Davison was similarly careful, in placing Spohr on the highest pedestal, to preempt the charge of unjustly exalting him above Mendelssohn, commenting:

> Spohr fully deserves all the honours paid to him - his years, his experience, and his genius make him the acknowledged representative of German music at the present time. After Mozart came Beethoven - after Beethoven, Weber - after Weber comes Spohr, and to him, should he survive him, will succeed Mendelssohn. It is fit that in art, as in other matters of import, priority of years, when accompanied by proportionate worth, should have due weight - and I am not making any comparison between Spohr and Mendelssohn when I honour the dignity that sits so gracefully upon age.[145]

Nevertheless, comments can occasionally be found which indicate a clear preference for Mendelssohn in specific fields of composition, especially that of oratorio after the production of Elijah in 1845; thus The Musical World, in a discussion of oratorio, remarked:

> Spohr, the only possible rival of Mendelssohn, though his oratorios abound in beautiful melodies, delightfully harmonised and instrumented, does not sustain that upward flight, which is the first quality we look for in such important efforts.[146]

Chorley agreed broadly with this verdict on Spohr as a vocal writer, but even he, little as he relished Spohr's music, confessed that 'As a writer for stringed instruments Dr. Spohr is admirable - as a symphonist, too, he shares honours with Mendelssohn'.[147]

Mendelssohn, though widely idolised, was not above criticism, and The Spectator complained in 1846 that 'Repetition, and forms in danger of becoming hackneyed abound too much in this master';[148] but, taking all the available evidence into consideration, it seems that the public utterances of music critics on the preeminence of Spohr, or his equality with Mendelssohn, were somewhat at odds with general opinion or in some cases even perhaps with their own private feelings. It is clear that the open press discussion of their respective merits which took place in the 1850's was already taking place at a verbal level in the 1840's; this impression is certainly gained from a letter which Mendelssohn wrote to Charlotte Moscheles in 1841, where he expressed his regret at being set up as a rival to Spohr. He wrote in reply to a letter from her:

> The only thing I regret in your charming letter is that you should have countenanced the strange attempts at making comparisons between Spohr and myself, or the petty cock-fights in which, for some inconceivable reason and much to my regret, we have been pitted against each other in England. I never had the slightest idea of such competition or rivalry. You may laugh at me, or possibly be vexed at my taking up such a silly matter so seriously. But there is something serious at the bottom of it; and this pretended antagonism, imagined by Heaven knows whom, can in no way serve either of us, but must rather be detrimental to both. Besides, never could I appear as the opponent of a master of Spohr's standing, whose greatness is so firmly established; for, even as a boy I had the greatest esteem for him in every respect, and, with my riper years, this feeling has in no way been weakened.[149]

Despite the rather pointless wrangling over which of the two was the greater composer, it is clear that when all was said and done there was no doubt that both must be placed in the top rank. Some, like Davison, would have admitted that they once thought Spohr 'the greatest composer the world ever produced, - or nearly so';[150] but the commonly accepted view was that he must be placed lower, but only just lower than the three great masters of German music. Particular compositions, however, were often cited as being on the same level as theirs; for instance, The Morning Post referred in 1844 to 'the magnificent "Weihe der Töne," a symphony which, with his second (in D minor) ranks justly with the instrumental triumphs of

Beethoven and Mozart'.[151] A writer in The Quarterly Review expressed it neatly when he observed:

> It has been cleverly said by Reichardt that Haydn built himself a lovely villa, Mozart erected a stately palace over it, but Beethoven raised a tower on top of that, and whosoever should venture to build higher would break his neck. There is no fear of such temerity at present. Weber, Spohr and Mendelssohn have each added a porch in their various styles of beauty, but otherwise there are no signs of further structure.[152]

Indeed, including the 'debatable celebrities of the continent', there seemed to be very little competition. Chorley in a review of the works of A.F. Lindblad commented:

> Few, we apprehend will deny that musical creation in Europe is in a state of suspense, if not of exhaustion. The schools of Italy, Germany, and France, have no one to show younger than Mendelssohn - Rossini continues capriciously silent - Meyerbeer, in the prime of his renown, cautiously or coquettishly reserved - Spohr wastes his strength in vain efforts to achieve the picturesque and dramatic - and Auber, if still piquant, is piquant by repetition rather than variety.[153]

Of the composers Chorley mentioned, only Spohr and Mendelssohn could be considered to be in the true classical tradition. Among young English critics and composers the feeling that the only true standard could be set by German music was still strong. The force with which this view was expressed, as well as the natural inclination to accept it among professional musicians, and the fact that it was easy to maintain the moral superiority of German music over Italian and French music, made it difficult for opponents of the view to voice their opinions without circumspection; to question it would almost have been tantamount to questioning the existence of God. (Such disagreement as there was will be examined in chapter 6.)

Other German composers who might have presented a challenge to the position of Spohr and Mendelssohn in the hierarchy of great composers were hardly known in England. Schubert had not yet assumed his place in the musical pantheon, being effectively represented in England only by a few songs; his C major symphony had been ridiculed by the Philharmonic orchestra and his works were scathingly attacked in The Musical World in 1844. Schumann, who might

have been considered a living rival, fared little better until Clara Schumann popularised his music in the 1860's. Chorley was a particularly vehement critic of his compositions; as late as 1856 he remarked: 'ours are days when taste must be carefully watched, and the works of Dr. Schumann (with some trifling exceptions) are too pretending to be endured'.[154] Of non-German composers who might have been considered, Chopin, though admired, could not, in view of his restricted output be considered a great composer;* and Berlioz made little impact until the 1850's when, despite a degree of popularity, he was still regarded as something of an eccentric. Composers who primarily wrote opera were considered to be outside the pale by most of the musical intelligentsia, the only important exception being Cherubini, whose operas were, in any case, seldom performed in England.

After 1842 few large-scale works by Spohr were introduced into England. The last two symphonies, the Concert Overture op.126 and the Concertante for string quartet and orchestra op.131 were the only new orchestral works; the only choral work was a setting of the 84th Psalm. There were, however, a substantial number of new chamber compositions, including the five Piano Trios opp.119, 123, 124, 133 and 142, the Piano Sonata op.125, the Piano Quintet op.130, the String Sextet op.140 and the Septet op.147. Whereas the orchestral works were little better than failures, the chamber music seems to have met with a more cordial reception. All of these compositions, except the Sextet, involved the piano as a leading instrument and more than doubled his important contributions to that instrument. This spate of works had been immediately preceded by a group of pieces for violin and piano; the Duos Concertants opp.95, 96 and 112, composed in 1836 and 1837 and the Sonates Concertantes opp.113, 114 and 115 (which were, in fact, arrangements of the Sonatas for Violin and Harp written between 1806 and 1811). The works for violin and piano had made relatively little impact, probably because their introduction coincided with that of several major works, though it had been remarked of the Duo Concertante op.112 in 1840:

*For evidence of this sort of attitude see Willett Adye's Musical Notes (1869).

> This is a grand and lengthened composition of the most classical proportions. It gives us great pleasure in an age of insignificant bagatelle-writing to receive a work of this extended form, and though it cannot be classed among Spohr's happiest productions, it contains enough beauties, albeit the peculiar beauties of its author, to merit the attention and command the interest of every connoisseur.[155]

The judgement that this Duo and its two companions were not among Spohr's 'happiest productions' seems a fair one. They are certainly not such fine compositions as the Piano Trios.

In choosing to write Piano Trios, Spohr was adding to a relatively limited repertoire for this medium, whose popularity was growing in England with the great increase in chamber music concerts given by pianists. Wessel and Stapleton hastened to publish each of the five trios as it appeared. They gave the first Trio a full-page advertisement in The Musical Examiner (which was owned by them) printing copies of reviews at length. Those from The Atlas and The Musical World give an impression of what seems to have been the general opinion among connoisseurs. The Atlas observed:

> As in every other species of composition, Spohr has undertaken and treated this pianoforte trio in a manner entirely his own. As elsewhere, he may reproduce himself, but he imitates no one beside. Through all the details of its construction, even to the manner of using the instruments in combination it has no parallel in the trios of Beethoven, Hummel, Mendelssohn, or any other writer. Almost the first characteristic that strikes the eye is its immense and continuous intricacy... Its harmonic march is so complicated, its parts so intervolved, and its plan so little capable of the kind of analysis to which ordinary or even extraordinary space limits us, that anything permitted us beyond general remark would do but scant justice to the composition... Whatever labour be devoted to the execution of this work will be amply repaid by its effect; and we warmly counsel our musical readers to prove by experience those strange and beautiful characteristics to which we have been able but obscurely to refer.[156]

The Musical World was equally enthusiastic, after some general comments the review continued:

> The appearance of a pianoforte trio by him, his first and only one, is, therefore, to the admirers of his works - in which class may be comprehended all true lovers of music - an event of no slight interest, of no ordinary importance. If we except the pianoforte trios of Beethoven, Mozart, and

> Mendelssohn, no first-rate efforts of the kind are extant; but now that Spohr has added his name to the illustrious triad, we may look forward to another family of chef-d'oeuvre in one of the most interesting departments of high art... Our impression of this trio, is, that it is one of the very best and completest efforts of its composer.

Like The Atlas, this review stressed its very great technical difficulties and counselled amateurs to approach them seriously and 'with an artist-like feeling of enthusiasm', concluding:

> Thus approached and thus rendered, we cannot hesitate to say, that the result will be fully up to their expectations, will wholly satisfy their most zealous imaginings. In any case, were this trio less of a masterpiece than it assuredly is, being the first effort of its kind from the pen of so great a composer as Spohr, it is indisputably an object of very general interest among all true worshipers of music; professional or amateur, one and all of whom, if our admonition be accepted, will not lose a moment in obtaining it.(156)

The First Piano Trio was shortly followed by the Second, which Wessel and Stapleton announced with the following recommendation:

> Highly as the first trio of this great master has been admired; the second will, from the exquisite flow of its melody, and the admirable variety of its harmonies, command a still greater need of approbation.[157]

When performed at the Society of British Musicians in December 1844, The Musical World thought it 'far superior' to the First Trio and commented:

> It is altogether one of the finest of his chamber compositions ... The reception of each movement, and especially the last and best (in F minor), the difficulties of which are immense for all parties...was enthusiastic to an unusual degree. We have seldom had a more thorough treat than this performance, to which the beauty of the composition and the skill of the executants contributed in almost equal shares.[158]

The Musical Examiner concurred, perhaps not surprisingly, for by this time both journals were under Davison's control. But a different view was taken by Chorley in The Athenaeum when the Second Piano Trio was given at the Society of British Musicians in 1846. He remarked that to hear it

> as the composition of a favourite master...was interesting; though few or none among the listeners will desire its repetition. The late pianoforte works of Spohr are indeed eminently tiresome. There is no freshness in their first ideas; the leading instrument is treated with no remarkable ingenuity, - and the form of construction must have been anticipated by any one who

has gone through even a moderate course of Spohr-isms.

In one respect only was he in agreement with The Musical World, saying that 'The finale is the most spirited and entertaining of the movements'.[159]

Chorley's attitude towards Spohr's Piano Sonata which was published by Wessel and Stapleton in 1843 was equally critical, after finding much fault with in his review of the work[160], he commented on its performance at the Society of British Musicians on December 1 1843, saying:

> It fell dead upon the audience; nor could the occasionally rich and masterly modulations make them forgetful of the meagreness of idea, and the escape by artifice from the requisitions of musical construction to which we heretofore adverted. /i.e. in his review./ [161]

Chorley's description of the audience's reaction is strikingly at odds with that given in The Musical World's review of the same concert; which maintained:

> The fine playing of Mr. Jewson was displayed to eminent advantage in the masterly and difficult sonata of Spohr, which he interpreted to admiration, and was loudly applauded.[162]

In the absence of other reviews it is impossible to decide whose account was closer to the truth; though when performed at Holmes's soirées in 1844 it was noted that 'each movement was received with the warmest applause'.[163]
In general, however, it is fair to say that though no one hailed it as one of his greatest works, other published opinions were far more appreciative than Chorley's. G. French Flowers found things to criticise, but also much to admire (see MW, XVIII(1843) 374-5); so too did The Musical World, which began its review with the observation: 'The genius of Spohr seems inexhaustible', and, in contrast to Chorley, commented on 'the ingenuity and untiring invention which he displays'. The most persistent reservation was over 'the abundance of its modulation', but it remarked of the last movement:

> This movement is extremely difficult, but well repays the trouble in the practice of it. Excess of modulation and an undue leaning to chromatic harmonies, are here also to be traced, but the sparkling melody and never dying animation of the entire movement, extort, at the same time, forgiveness and admiration.[164]

The others of this group of chamber works to be introduced between Spohr's visits of 1843 and 1847 were the Third Piano Trio, given at one of Wessel's

Soirées in March 1846, and the Piano Quintet op.130 which was performed for the first time at the Society of British Musicians in December of that year. The Quintet elicited the, by now, customary enthusiastic response from The Musical World, which averred:

> With all the characteristics of the great musician's style this quintet exhibits many features that are absolutely new, and the composition as a whole is masterly brilliant and effective. It will, doubtless, win the attention of our pianists generally, and become a stock piece in the approaching concert season... The quintet was well received and the slow movement redemanded.[165]

However, it seems probable that, whatever impact it made on the British Musicians, it proved less appealing elsewhere, for it does not appear to have been performed at any of the important chamber concerts during the ensuing concert season. Spohr's works, on the whole, were evidently less popular with the public and with many concert givers than they were with the supporters of classical music in the press and the earnest band of young musicians who formed the backbone of the Society of British Musicians.*

Spohr's vocal works, particularly arias and ensembles from his operas, were an exception to this. At the Philharmonic Society vocal items by Spohr outnumbered those by Weber and Mendelssohn on average during the period under consideration, and at other soirées and concerts with any classical pretensions the programme seems scarcely to have been complete without one or other of his most popular vocal pieces. 'Night's lingering shades', a trio from Azor and Zemira, was almost ubiquitous, while the baritone aria 'Der Kriegeslust' and the duet 'Fairest maiden' from Jessonda, 'Rose softly blooming' from Azor and Zemire and several numbers from Faust were hardly less popular. According to statistics collected by William Weber, only 29% of the total number of concerts given could be considered classical at this period[166], yet it is

* On the other hand, he was clearly considered to have enough popular appeal for Daguerre to include his music in the programme of the Diorama (a sort of elaborate magic lantern show). The descriptive programme for the 1845 exhibition (Heidleburg, and an exterior view of Notre Dame de Paris), notes:

> NB The Grand Machine-Organ is constructed by Messrs GRAY and DAVISON, of the New Road; and during the midnight effect, in the Picture of Notre Dame, two pieces, composed by SPOHR, will be performed alternately.

likely that in England during the 1840's, at a time of great expansion of concert giving, there was a proportionally larger increase in this kind of concert than the lighter types of entertainment. The Morning Herald had observed in 1844

> A year or two back it was considered that when the Philharmonic and the Antient Concerts commenced, the musical season had only begun - and not till then. But things now are different. The year of 1844, from the middle of January, has exhibited one continued series of musical meetings, none of those catchpenny affairs which impudence dignifies with the name of "concerts", but first-rate sensible undertakings.[167]

The question of public taste will be considered further in the context of musical journalism; for the present it is sufficient to note that the increase in chamber concerts during the mid-1840's was very considerable. Some of the most prominent of these which began to function between 1843 and 1845 were: Sterndale Bennett's Classical Chamber Concerts, Dando's Quartet Concerts, Banister's Quartet Parties, the Society of British Musicians' Chamber Concerts, Holmes' Soirées, Blagrove's Concerts, Davison's Matinées Musicales and Ella's Musical Union. All of these drew upon Spohr's music for their programmes.

Not only the recently composed works with piano were being given, but also performances of the string chamber music were becoming noticeably more common. The Third Double Quartet in E minor op.87 became quite a favourite. A reviewer of one of Dando's concerts, at which it was performed in 1844, called it 'a gorgeous and picturesque inspiration, the cheval de bataille of the concert',[168] and when given at the Musical Union in 1845 The Morning Chronicle felt that for the first time one of Spohr's double quartets had been 'performed in such a way as to exhibit the rich and beautiful effects of which it is capable'.[169] It is probable that, as with so much else of Spohr's music, only a very good performance could adequately convey an idea of the beauties which the music contained, and by the mid 1840's the requisite standard was more frequently being achieved. No doubt the improvement in the quality of chamber music performances owed much to the fact that it was being

played with increasing frequency in public, which cannot have failed to develop techniques of ensemble playing. Weight is lent to this supposition by a comparison of reviews from the 1830's with those from the 1840's. Two reviews of performances of Spohr's double quartets, one from 1839 and the other from 1846 illustrate this nicely. Referring to the E minor Double Quartet, given at Mori's Classical Chamber Concerts in 1839, Chorley had written:

> truth to say, /it/ is as dry and tedious a piece of music as we desired not to hear. The andante, indeed, contains some brilliant passages of execution for the first violin, but, to the entire composition, freshness of conception, or variety of forms, is alike wanting. Nor was the performance of a nature to redeem this barrenness. Spohr's music beyond that of all his contemporaries, calls for the utmost delicacy and expressiveness of manner - the highest possible polish - the most exact proportioning of parts to each other. We listened for these excellencies in vain.[170]

That much of Chorley's dislike of the work disappeared when he heard it well performed is indicated by his comment on a performance at the Beethoven Quartet Society in 1847 in which Spohr himself took part; then he referred to it as 'his fine double quartet in E minor, led by himself very beautifully'.[171] A review in The Spectator of the D minor Double Quartet op.69, given at one of Dando's Concerts in 1846, confirms The Morning Chronicle's indication of the previous year, that great advances had been made in performing these works with a corresponding growth in their appeal. It observed:

> Time has gradually brought us to the level of those great compositions of Spohr, the double quartets. Artists have learned better to deliver and hearers to appreciate them; their elaborate counterpoint, new harmonies, and multiplicity of effects, no longer confuse; and it is impossible to recall a more striking contrast than the double quartets make at present compared with what they made on their first public introduction into England - now some 12 or 14 years ago. It is good after a period of considerable doubt and hesitation, to find these fruits of modern science and enthusiasm fully appreciated. And assuredly no music gets so firmly settled in favour as that which has submitted to this conflict of opinion and survived the ordeal.[172]

It added that 'they may be obtained as duets for the pianoforte in excellent foreign arrangements'.

Others of Spohr's chamber works, too, were appearing in public more often and being received with enthusiasm. The Nonet, given at the Society of British

Musicians in November 1844 called forth the following remarks from The Musical World:

> The Nonetto of Spohr, a chef-d'oeuvre of elaborate instrumentation, overflowing with graceful melody and passages of the utmost elegance, was the great feature of the evening. It was...rapturously applauded throughout.[173]

The solo quartets, however, did not gain critical approval, perhaps because they were felt to be at odds with the reputation for artistic dignity which Spohr had acquired; in 1844, op.43 was described by The Musical World as 'showy, but somewhat trifling',[174] and again in 1848 as 'not one of this great writer's happiest inspirations, being, excepting the form of the composition, a violin solo with accompaniments'.[175] But other works for violin, particularly the duos and concertos began to claim a much larger degree of attention, and appreciation than had formerly been the case. When the Ninth Violin Concerto in D minor was performed at a Philharmonic concert in 1845 The Musical World commented:

> Let us hope that the good example set by M. Sainton will induce violinists to explore still further the treasures of Spohr's violin music. We believe there are nine concertos out of which hitherto we have only been publicly acquainted with the Scena Dramatique, which in plan and general interest is inferior to the one performed so admirably by M. Sainton on Monday night.[176]

And when, at the last Philharmonic concert of that season, the Concertante for two violins and orchestra op.88 was played by Sainton and Sivori, The Morning Post exclaimed:

> Spohr's duet is a masterpiece... The applause was enthusiastic, and the result will lead we trust, to a further ransacking of the mine of beauties contained in Spohr's compositions for the violin, which have hitherto been shelved, with a few familiar exceptions.[177]

This performance pleased Chorley also, though he could not resist the opportunity to indulge in his usual sniping at Spohr's music in general, saying:

> To ourselves this brought the peculiar pleasure of a long-expressed wish fulfilled. Whereas Spohr's own congregation, whom it was natural to presume well read in his compositions, have been willing to tarry among his oratorio-like operas, or his operatic oratorios, ("The Last Judgement" excepted from this epithet,) to uphold his later symphonies as marvels of "fancy and spirit," in short, to prop up works which no partizanship can maintain in public favour, - we have for years been

> longing to hear some of the composer's works written ere youth had passed, or freshness of idea was disregarded for curiosities of construction. Foremost among these are his violin duetts, whether unaccompanied (a treasure from which the givers of chamber concerts turn aside with curious pertinacity) or with orchestra, as the one given on Monday. Anything more pleasing in subject, more finely dialogued for the instruments, or more brilliantly adapted to display the players could not be desired. The spell at last is broken, and we trust that the whole series of compositions unknown here will be performed.[178]

Chorley often made the point that he thought the 'duets...with his concertos, are Dr. Spohr's most distinguished works'. Few other critics would have dismissed Spohr's other compositions so lightly, but many would doubtless have agreed with the conclusion of a critic in The Morning Post, expressed on a performance of the 11th Violin Concerto at a Philharmonic concert in 1846, that:

> The violin concerto of Spohr is one of the most masterly efforts of his pen. It is a proof among many that he has given of his supremacy over all composers as a writer for the violin.[179]

This critic, too, agreed that the only one commonly heard, the Gesangszena, was inferior to both numbers 9 and 11.

Despite Chorley's comment to the contrary, the unaccompanied duets were beginning to be used as concert pieces, and the duo for violin and viola op.13, in particular, became a favourite. It was performed twice by Sivori and Vieuxtemps at successive Matinées Musicales given by Davison in June 1845, and in a conversation with Spohr later than year at the Bonn Festival, Davison had made a special reference to its popularity in England.

The increase of chamber concerts meant that there was no lack of opportunity for performances of Spohr's smaller-scale works, but for the adequate performance of orchestral music, including the violin concertos, there were still very limited facilities in the mid-1840's. When it had been proposed in 1843 that the Philharmonic society should do only one symphony at each concert, instead of the customary two, The Musical Examiner expostulated:

> eight symphonies a year - or, in other words, only eight performances, annually, of the highest class

> of musical compositions - for it is well known that nowhere in England, but at the Philharmonic, can we meet with anything like a satisfactory rendering of the orchestral masterpieces of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Spohr.[180]

In an earlier editorial in the same periodical, attention had been drawn to the dearth of good orchestral performances, and the writer had called for more performances of Spohr's symphonies, especially instancing numbers 2, 4, and 7. In that article the Societa Armonica, described as the Philharmonic's 'bantling', had been mentioned as the only other body capable of giving anything like an adequate performance of such things[181]. In 1845, too, Davison complained about the neglect of some fine overtures by the Philharmonic society, including in his list Spohr's overtures to Faust, Pietro von Abano, Der Alchymist, Macbeth, and Alruna.[182]

Considering the position which by general consent (Chorley excepted) Spohr's symphonies and overtures were accorded, it certainly seems curious that they received such infrequent performances. Some evidence from reviews of performances between 1843 and 1847 will help to illustrate the state of opinion about the symphonies at that period. No new symphonies by Spohr were introduced between these years but several old ones were performed by the Philharmonic.

The First Symphony was included in the concert of March 25 1844, along with Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, and it elicited a favourable response from most critics. The Standard commented:

> The Symphonies - two of the most cherished of the Philharmonic repertoire - went admirably. The Larghetto in Spohr's is one of the sweetest things imaginable - a picture of gentleness and innocent gaity. This delicious movement was beautifully played. The Allegretto, another of those engaging streams of melody which Spohr pours forth with such spontaneous exuberance, was also effectively given.[183]

The first sentence of this extract is curious, for the symphony had not been performed by the Philharmonic since 1839, and was not to be given again until 1851. Presumably the audience enjoyed the performance; The Spectator noted that it 'seems to have gained strength in the number of its partizans'.[184] There were however, some criticisms. The Morning Post's reporter expressed his

reservations as follows:

> Spohr is not like Beethoven - an orator, poet, and painter as well as musician, but the former embodies scenes of poetical genius, if they do not reach sublimity. The great drawback in the hearing of Spohr is his aggregation of complex ideas, producing fatigue by the close observance of complex phrases.[185]

The Illustrated London News agreed with this, commenting: 'It is certainly a fine composition, but overlaid with effects'.[186] In August 1844 the symphony was repeated at Blagrove's Concert (one of the few orchestral benefit concerts), perhaps in response to a desire to hear it again; but there appear to have been no reviews of that performance.

The following year the Philharmonic performed the Fifth Symphony for the second time, and it seems to have met with little if any more appreciation than it had on its first performance in 1840. The Morning Post thought it 'a very unfavourable specimen of his genius', and considered it 'dry and pedantic, overloaded with modulations, full of trite sequences, and altogether, devoid of melodious ideas'.[187] The Athenaeum regarded it as 'the notoriously driest and least interesting'[188] of Spohr's symphonies. Not all reviews, however, were quite so condemnatory, and the peformance was clearly enjoyed by some of the audience, for The Standard observed:

> The symphony by Spohr is not one of the finest specimens of the great master's art; his rich exuberance of fancy, his passionate grace and his combining ingenuity, being but scantily developed. It afforded, however, considerable pleasure, for the inherent elegance of Spohr can never be passed by unheeded.[189]

This critic also implied that, despite its flaws, it must be regarded as a worthy and substantial work, remarking: 'Some regrets were expressed in the room that the practice of playing one of Beethoven's symphonies had been departed from, but the substitutions could hardly be complained of'. (The other symphony had been by Haydn). In this judgement The Great Gun concurred, commenting that 'Both Spohr's C minor and Haydn's E flat are great works', but the writer, who was probably the journal's editor, Gruneisen, qualified this with the resuscitation of an old objection, adding:

> If the genius of Spohr had equalled his science, he might have been the greatest of living composers, but learned as he is in instrumentation, his deficiency of imagination is too often apparent.[190]

The Philharmonic directors seem to have been working on the principle of including at least one of Spohr's symphonies in each season's programme at this time, and the one chosen for 1846 was the Second Symphony. This had last been played four years before, when it elicited Davison's enthusiastic hope that it would become an annual feature (see p.128above). Despite its neglect, the symphony had lost none of its appeal, and was hailed with considerable pleasure by critics and audience alike, the scherzo being encored. There were no adverse reviews but some of the critics, while commending the symphony, used the occasion to air their opinions on general aspects of Spohr's music. Several reviewers advanced the view that it was the finest of Spohr's symphonies. The Morning Post asserted:

> Spohr's symphony is justly considered his chef d'oeuvre. It is also his most complete work: every movement is fine, and unity is preserved amidst a wonderful variety of character in the motivi.[191]

And after claiming that the finale was 'one of the freshest inspirations in the whole range of orchestral writing', the critic concluded: 'It is one of the few modern efforts that are fit companions for the great symphonies of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven'. Hogarth, in The Daily News also took the view that it was Spohr's best symphony, and at the same time dredged up his old objections to the later programme symphonies, saying:

> We regard this as the most masterly of his works of this class, and superior to the more ambitious compositions which he has since produced, and in which he has taxed his art beyond its powers as a language, not only of description but of abstract thought.[192]

Even Chorley could find virtually nothing to criticise in this work, but observed that with a less skilful performance all the things he usually complained about might have obtained with respect to this symphony. The point about the need for a very careful performance of Spohr's music was also taken up again in The Spectator, whose critic remarked:

> Spohr's beautiful symphony, now for more than twenty years established at the Philharmonic Concerts, was perhaps never received with such an acclamation of applause; diversity of opinion respecting the merits of that master having hitherto been aided and encouraged by the indifferent rehearsal and careless performance of his works. Such a picture as that of Monday...no one could resist; and we really think that an impulse was given to the fame of Spohr as an orchestral composer through the novel effects of this old symphony. The brilliant figures for the violins in the first allegro were executed with a clearness and ensemble never yet obtained in England...[193]

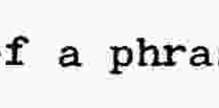
This was confirmed by The Morning Chronicle, which praised Costa's conducting, and remarked: 'Spohr was certainly never so well understood nor appreciated as he was last night, every point coming out with marvellous clearness'.[194] The Morning Herald also appreciated Costa's performance and voiced the complaint which must have been in the minds of many of the symphony's admirers, with the commemt:

> To Costa...some praise is due, for hastening to exhibit and proclaim the compliment bestowed upon the society by one of the greatest and most amiable musicians of his time, the value of which seems to have been idly and unworthily forgotten.[195]

But in spite of this admonition and the obvious success of the performance, the symphony was not repeated at the Philharmonic until 1852. This may partly be explained by information in a review in The Illustrated London News which implied that the appreciators of the symphony, though vociferous, were in a minority, and that the average concert-goer may have found it too 'scientific', as had so often been the case in the past. It observed:

> As it was in the first time Costa had conducted one of Spohr's symphonies, considerable interest was manifested by the partisans of that eminent master. They were in ecstasies at the result, and encored the playful "Scherzo" with enthusiasm. Spohr's compositions are excessively learned and chromatic; to the cultivated artist they are a source of greater delight than to amateurs, who are more excited by the poetry of art.[196]

As a postscript to this performance it is interesting to note that, whatever The Spectator and The Morning Chronicle may have said about the superiority of the performance over previous ones, even under Costa, whose insistence on orchestral discipline was proverbial, the Philharmonic did not

perform in a way which would have satisfied the more stringent requirements of a later period. The Morning Post complained in its review of the concert that uniform bowings had not yet been adopted and that this was very detrimental to the execution of a phrase with the rhythm  which pervades the first movement of the symphony.

In 1847 the symphony chosen for performance by the Philharmonic was Die Weihe der Töne, last given by them in 1843 (but it had in the meantime been included in Jullien's concerts). Its reception seems on the whole, to have been good, though it had not yet achieved the acclaim it was later to win. The Musical World's review was eulogistic[197], being in much the same terms as the article in 1843 (see p.144 above); but the programme still proved a stumbling block to some critics. The Morning Herald nevertheless conceded that

> Apart from its metaphysical purport, however, the symphony may be regarded as the instrumental chef-d'oeuvre of Spohr. In no other single work for the orchestra, does the genius of the master manifest itself with such exuberant felicity.[198]

The Daily News took a completely opposite stance, wholly condemning the work's programme, with a long article in which it attacked the idea of programme music in general, concluding:

> It is evident, moreover, that Spohr's self-imposed plan has much impaired the beauty of his composition; and the symphony, though admirable in many of its details, is, as a whole, a laboured, dry and fatigueing work. It was very coolly received, the audience being evidently weary of it.[199]

(This clarifies the same critic's remarks on the Second Symphony the previous year.) Whether this critic was really describing the audience's reaction, or merely projecting his own, is difficult to tell; there are no other indications that the symphony was badly received. Since the writer of this review was almost certainly Hogarth, it is interesting to note that his attitude to Die Weihe der Töne was considerably modified at a later date, judging from his comments in his History of the Philharmonic Society (1862) where he wrote,

> It is easy to see that this design is highly suggestive

> of musical expression and effect; and the symphony which, as a whole,is of colossal proportions, is full of powerful and beautiful passages. It met, especially at first with much criticism... But the work has stood the test of time, and is generally regarded as one of the author's greatest achievements.[200]

One probable reason why this symphony took so long to be accepted was, once again, its technical difficulties. This was touched upon by The Morning Post, which remarked:

> Spohr's grand Characteristic Symphony, perhaps his masterpiece...was perhaps never better performed. There are few works for the orchestra more complicated, more difficult of execution, and the many times that the slow movement in particular has miscarried with a Philharmonic orchestra, affords sufficient proof of how severe a trial this symphony is both to the conductor and to the players.[201]

Spohr's visit to England in 1847

After his conversation with Spohr at the Bonn Festival in 1845 Davison reported: 'Spohr's enthusiasm for England and the English is unbounded',[202] and also remarked that Spohr hoped soon to have another opportunity to visit England. An invitation from the Sacred Harmonic Society to come and conduct his oratorios with them provided the occasion for him to realise this wish.

This visit was in many ways less eventful than that of 1843. To some extent the high level of excitement which had accompanied that visit resulted from its novelty, it being then 23 years since he had last appeared in London; in 1847 this element was, of course, missing. The later visit, too, did not involve so many public engagements as had the previous one. Spohr's only public appearance, other than at the Sacred Harmonic Society, was at a meeting of the Beethoven Quartet Society, held in his honour. This consisted entirely of his own works, and he led a performance of his Double Quartet in E minor, The Musical World noting that 'his playing electrified all present'. But even this concert was a semi-private occasion. Another factor that conduced to make the visit more sedate was that the dissension engendered by the Taylor affair seems to have died down.

Public attention, therefore, was focused on the performances of his

oratorios. The original intention had been to give all three of them, but religious objections to Calvary were still strong enough to interfere with this plan, and in the event it was found expedient to substitute a second performance of The Fall of Babylon. As had been the case in 1843, the majority of the press and the large audiences which came to hear his music at Exeter Hall were highly enthusiastic. All the critics, however, were agreed in placing The Fall of Babylon lower than The Last Judgement but opinion differed as to how much lower. After the first performance of The Fall of Babylon on July 9 The Daily News averred:

> "The Fall of Babylon" is a great work which could be equalled by no living musician save only Mendelssohn; but it is not. we think, equal to Spohr's own previous oratorios "The Last Judgement," and "The Crucifixion."[203]

This critic found it too secular in parts and commented of the 'handwriting on the wall' scene, that it was 'like all attempts of the kind (Handel's included) a total failure'. But he nevertheless concluded 'These, however, are the blemishes of a noble work, which contains beauties of the highest order'. The Morning Post declined to specify its reservations about the work because of the excitement caused by Spohr's presence and 'the great personal respect in which he was held alike by the performers and the audience'.[204] In fact, many reviews avoided going into details about the composition, clearly for similar reasons. However, articles in The Illustrated London News and The Morning Chronicle, probably both by Gruneisen, and in The Athenaeum by Chorley, dilated at some length on what they saw as the weaknesses of the oratorio. The former repeated the old charge which he levelled at Spohr's compositions in general, saying in The Morning Chronicle:

> After several hearings we see no reason to change our opinions as to the merit of this work. It is the production of a man of great learning; but it is not to our minds an inspiration of genius.[205]

In The Illustrated London News it was remarked that 'His instrumentation is most elaborate, but his chromatic combinations become monotonous and heavy after a short time'.[206] Chorley indulged in more wholesale condemnation, observing:

> the further we make acquaintance with his choral compositions, whether sacred or profane, the more thoroughly we are convinced that they are written on a mistaken system - or are mistakes because written without any system.[207]

But the criticisms in The Morning Chronicle were qualified by the statement:

> It is but an act of justice to record, that our opinion appears to have been in a considerable minority, for nothing could exceed the enthusiasm of the audience.

Such enthusiasm was entirely in tune with the feelings of a writer in The Morning Herald who was induced to exclaim:

> We rejoice to find that Spohr is so honestly appreciated in this country, and that, in spite of the double allowance of Italian opera with which we are inundated, and the profusion of light unthinking tune which such flippant maestros as Verdi pour forth at the bidding of fashion, there is still a class of the community who can comprehend the infinity of his intellect, and are ready with the homage due to exalted and undying genius. In all branches of musical composition Spohr is equally great, and when the numerical abundance of his works is remembered...the wonder is that the conceptive faculty should have been so uniformly active, and that it should have originated so much to be admired and so little to be condemned.[208]

The association of Spohr with the highest ideals of art continued to be a powerful recommendation to those who deplored what they saw as the vitiation of public taste by the proliferation of unworthy music.

If, as seems likely, most of the critics had been motivated more by respect for the composer than by genuine enthusiasm for The Fall of Babylon on July 9, they appreciated The Last Judgement on July 23 much more. The other two works performed with it however, The 84th Psalm and The Christian's Prayer, according to The Morning Chronicle, 'did not produce the slightest impression on the auditory'; but it went on to say that the oratorio '-Spohr's masterpiece in sacred writing - created a powerful sensation'.[209] The Daily News reported that 'Many of the movements were encored; and the illustrious composer, before leaving the orchestra was loudly cheered for several minutes'.[210] There is little evidence in reviews to suggest that the sort of criticism which Chorley and, to a lesser extent, Gruneisen had tended to level at The Last Judgement, along with the rest of Spohr's output were accepted by the vast

majority of critics and audience. The warm reception which the oratorio undeniably elicited provides clear evidence of a widespread rejection at this time of such remarks as had been made in The Athenaeum and The Morning Chronicle on the occasion of the oratorio's performance in November 1846.*

At the Beethoven Quartet Society the audience was of a very different kind from the huge audience which attended Exeter Hall, but it was no less favourable in its reactions to Spohr and his music. The Illustrated London News noted that:

> The reception given to Spohr by his brother artists and the connoisseurs was most enthusiastic, Jenny Lind applauding most cordially.[211]

And The Spectator said of the same event that 'He received with his usual unaffected simplicity, but with evident pleasure, the homage which everybody strove to pay him'.[212] The Atlas, too, stressed Spohr's characteristic modesty, saying:

> To see a composer utterly absorbed in his art, and so little bent on making a market of his popularity that he hurries from the scene of his triumph before his audience have had time to thank him is edifying.[213]

This was undoubtedly a quality which aroused great admiration in the moral climate of the age.

Without hindsight it must have seemed to most of Spohr's contemporaries in 1847 that, in spite of some criticisms, Spohr's reputation was even more firmly established than it had been four years before. The verdict of the audience at Exeter Hall had been unequivocally given in his favour, while the respect, almost amounting to veneration, of his most distinguished colleagues could not be in doubt. There seemed every prospect that his works would continue to gain a wider circulation and that with the inevitable improvement of public taste which was seen as inseparable from the optimistic Victorian ideal of progress, more and more people would be brought to the level of Spohr's music. By those who held these views Spohr's works continued to be seen as a powerful weapon in their arsenal for use in the battle for the improvement of taste. In this vein The Spectator commented:

> The present visit of this illustrious musician has been of great benefit to the progress of his art in England.

* See Ath xix(1846), 1147 & MC 5:XI:1846.

> He came to London on the invitation of the Sacred Harmonic Society, to superintend and direct their performance of two oratorios - The Fall of Babylon, and The Last Judgement. In doing this, he has enabled the Society to bring before the immense Metropolitan audiences who frequent the performances of Exeter Hall two of the greatest works in existence of the sacred musical drama... The enthusiastic reception of both these oratorios, and the demonstrations of personal admiration and respect for the author which accompanied the reception of his works, gave satisfactory proof of the growing taste and judgement of the great body of the London public. This taste and judgement will be still further increased by a more intimate knowledge of these as well as the other great compositions of Spohr, and of his younger brother Mendelssohn.(212)

His moral eminence was summed up in The Atlas with the statement:

> Never was position more fairly and honourably won than that of Spohr, nor elevation possessed freer from detraction and amidst such an acclamation of good will. He is "the last of the Romans;" following in the train of Beethoven, Cherubini, and Weber.[214]

All in all, therefore, this visit must have seemed not only a crowning triumph for a venerable composer, but also a new point of departure in the spread of his popularity; that this was largely an illusion only becomes clear in the context of the next forty years.

Chapter 6

1848 - 1859

The reasons for Spohr's failure to maintain his place in the first rank during the next 50 years are complex; they are variously related to the nature of his music, to the introduction of the music of other composers, to changing social conditions and intellectual ideas, and to the interaction of these and other factors. Apart from Chorley's often expressed objections, the 1840's was generally a period during which great respect and a high level of genuine enthusiasm had been manifest towards Spohr. The respect continued to be shown for many years (with a few notable exceptions), but the enthusiasm was clearly beginning to wane in the 1850's. In 1847, however, this trend was so far from being apparent that the death of Mendelssohn was very widely seem as removing the only possible challenger to Spohr's status as the greatest living composer. In The Spectator Mendelssohn's obituary provided an occasion to make this point. Speaking of oratorio, the writer commented:

> Spohr and Mendelssohn a few days since, were the only living possessors of the mantle of Handel, which now rests undivided upon the shoulders of the venerable musician of Cassel... In the orchestral symphony, too, Spohr and Mendelssohn shared the vacant throne of Beethoven, and the veteran of Cassel is now its sole occupant.[1]

Following shortly afterwards in April 1848, the first performance of Spohr's Eighth Symphony, commissioned by the Philharmonic Society, gave rise to similar observations, though there were divergent opinions about the work itself. The Morning Chronicle, and The Musical World which printed a variant

version of the same article, began with the assertion:

> Now that Mendelssohn is dead, Spohr holds the position of the first composer of the day, without a possible rival. No master has done more to advance the art in the highest department of composition than he, and as he has excelled and produced masterpieces in every style, his genius may be pronounced universal, and a place be assigned him by the side of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and the lamented musician just mentioned, who may appropriately be called the kings of art.[2]

Even Chorley commenced his review with an apparent admission of the same kind, but his remarks make it clear that whereas other critics believed that Spohr occupied a pre-eminent position through absolute merit, Chorley only conceded it because of the absence of serious opposition among living composers. He stated:

> The Philharmonic Directors, in the present dearth of classical musicians, could have done nothing better than offer a commission to Dr. Spohr: since the fantastic folk of the new German and French Schools are either too bad or too good to satisfy our audiences - and whereas the best aspirants in "Young England" has a style to seek, the Cassel Kapellmeister has established a manner of his own.[3]

And he followed this with a very unfavourable criticism of the symphony in question, saying that it was

> a production which, did artists possess self-knowledge, Dr. Spohr would not have sent to England; since there could be small doubt with anyone hearing it that it will be seldom, if ever, repeated. The ideas are old, and their treatment is precisely what everyone knew beforehand, who knows the master's tendency to incessant modulation - the cloying fullness of his score and the deficiency of that episodical matter which the Mozarts and Beethovens. even when their first thoughts have been ever so noble, loved to introduce in their compositions.[3]

This view, however, was certainly not shared by the critic of The Spectator; though, as is demonstrated by the following extract, he admitted a similar general criticism on the grounds of over-elaboration, but without judging it to be so damning a fault as Chorley considered it. He observed:

> In this, his latest work, the illustrious veteran betrays no decay in his powers. His inventive faculty is as vigorous as ever; he shows the same depth of thought, the same mastery of all the resources of harmony and the same unembarrassed ease in the management of instruments, which have always characterised his great orchestral compositions. Its only fault, too, is one which has always been laid to his charge - the uniform fulness

> of the score; a profusion of rich and intricate combinations, carried so far as at length to fatigue the ear, and to create a desire to be relieved by changes to simplicity and even thinness - changes which abound in the symphonies of Mozart and Beethoven.

Also in contrast to Chorley, this critic seems to have had no doubt that the symphony would be repeated, and he qualified his criticism of its complexity with the assertion, so often made about Spohr's music in the past, that familiarity would bring appreciation in its train, saying:

> Like all works of a profound character the symphonies of Spohr require to be well known in order to be thoroughly appreciated. They must be frequently heard in order to grasp their design, measure their proportions, and penetrate into the rich details of their instrumentation. All his previous symphonies which have been produced at these concerts have been found to gain on repetition; and the same thing will be the case with this. It was listened to with much interest, and warmly applauded; but exceptions were taken to parts of it on the score of obscurity, which will doubtless vanish on further acquaintance.[4]

The Morning Chronicle was equally impressed with the symphony, having only minor criticisms to make of it, also on the grounds of overelaboration. This reviewer concluded with a eulogy on the last movement and on the quality of the performance, and appended a plea for more frequent performance of Spohr's Second Symphony. He remarked:

> The finale, a rondo in G manor is the chef-d-oeuvre - the themes are fresh, beautiful and admirably contrasted, and the treatment, orchestral, contrapuntal, and harmonic, masterly, ingenious, and happy in the highest degree. Spohr has never, perhaps, written a more finished and admirable movement. The performance of this great work was wonderfully successful for a first essay. Except in the Scherzo which suffered from the imperfect articulation of the oboe...there were few blemishes to name... The Symphony was warmly received by the audience, and may, perhaps, convey a suggestion to the directors that the subscribers would not be unwilling to hear the first symphony which Spohr wrote for the Philharmonic; a work, considering its rare merits, by far too seldom heard.[5]

The Daily News called it 'a masterly work', but commented that 'as usual it smells strongly of the lamp, and appears to be the result of great labour rather than the inspiration of genius'.[6] But The Times observed that: 'The audience entered into the merits of the work with great warmth; and, from the zealous reception it encountered, it may be safely registered as a future favourite with the subscribers';[7] so clearly there must have been a substantial

proportion of them who appreciated its merits even at a first hearing. In fact, they were apparently never to get the chance of a second hearing; for by the time that the symphony might have been performed again by the Philharmonic, interest in Spohr had already declined too far to encourage the directors to repeat it. Only the symphonies that had already become established in the repertoire of the society were performed after 1860 and even these were infrequently given, despite the sort of rebuke which The Morning Chronicle had issued on behalf of the Second Symphony on this occasion.

Others of Spohr's earlier symphonies given at the Philharmonic during the next two seasons were The Historical in 1849 and the Third Symphony in 1850. None of the critics seemed especially pleased to renew their acquaintance with The Historical Symphony Chorley referred to it as 'Spohr's stupefying "Historical Symphony", a work which sounded none the better from its having been nine years laid by ', and he remarked that 'either "The Power of Sound" or the symphony with septett /sic/ soli /i.e. no. 7/ would have been a welcome substitution'.[8] Hogarth was quite distressed that it should have been performed, commenting:

> It was a pity, we think, to revive it... We were really sorry that the society should have thought proper to prevent a great man's error from being forgotten.[9]

And The Illustrated London News called it 'a work of dull, pedantic pretensions'.[10]

The Third Symphony, on the other hand, elicited widely differing reactions, which provide some interesting general observations. Most critics were more or less well disposed towards the work. Only Chorley could find nothing good to say about it; indeed, his response seems to have been little short of disgust, for he commented that the symphony was

> a curiosity in its meagreness of idea, mannerism of treatment, and immoderate display of modulation:- these characteristics being so blended and mystified by the composer's peculiar orchestral skill as even to become attractive, supposing we could consider the work as a solitary work, and not as one of a score in which the same combinations, sequences etc. etc. are repeated usque ad nauseam. To be relished, Spohr's compositions should be heard seldom.[11]

In contrast The Morning Chronicle felt that though there was much to criticise in the choice of other items in that particular Philharmonic concert,

> It was indeed well to commence with Spohr's Symphony, because that work contains some of his best writing in that form of composition.[12]

And The Daily News averred that

> Spohr's symphony in C minor is a great work and though, like all this master's compositions it smells a little too much of the lamp, and is so elaborate and full of harmony that it produces an impression of heaviness, yet it abounds in beauties of the highest order, and contains many passages worthy of Beethoven himself.[13]

The most detailed review was given in The Times and reprinted in The Musical World, and while its assessment of the symphony as a whole was decidedly favourable, the reviewer Davison, took the opportunity to make some general criticisms of Spohr's style. After high praise of the first movement, describing it as 'a perfect model, in which the utmost largeness of development and the richest variety of orchestral combinations are made subservient to a simplicity and clearness of outline not often surpassed even by Mozart', he dilated upon the prevailing faults of much of Spohr's music, saying:

> A more conscientious musician than Spohr, one with a deeper reverence for art and a profounder conviction of its lofty mission does not exist; while, on the other hand, few have been gifted with greater natural powers, or have known by intense application, how to obtain a more entire command of its resources.

But he claimed that Spohr's tendency to accept first ideas too readily had often caused him to work on feeble material out of which 'with all his extensive learning, and all his untiring industry' he had been unable to construct an interesting composition, and that it had led him 'into the production of more music to which a cultivated taste is altogether indifferent - since nothing but labour and the lamp is perceptible - than any other renowned composer of whom the history of the art makes mention'. This is particularly interesting, since it indicates a growing willingness on Davison's part to recognise the failings of a composer whom he had once idolised and whom he clearly still admired. Another point of interest in this

account is an indication that there continued to be a marked improvement in the standard of the performance, for he remarked: 'Since Mr. Costa has directed the band of the Philharmonic Society, we cannot remember so manifest a proof of its immense resources as the performance of this elaborate and difficult symphony of the first living composer'. Also the article provides confirmation of the limited circulation of Spohr's symphonies with the remark that apart from its performances at the Philharmonic Society (five performances in twenty years) 'it has never been given elsewhere in England',[14] though this is not strictly true, since it was performed at the City Amateur Concerts in 1831. The Morning Herald, too, observed that the symphony was 'so seldom performed that its introduction on the present occasion gave general satisfaction'.[15]

There seems little room to doubt that even though many of his important works were infrequently performed audience reaction towards those performances of Spohr's music which did take place about 1850 remained very favourable. The Fourth Piano Trio, given at one of Lindsay Sloper's Soirées in March 1848, was triumphantly received by the audience, and The Musical World was in no doubt that it contained all the freshness and originality which Chorley was constantly denying to Spohr's works. The reviewer commented:

> The first movement, an allegro, is full of delicious melody, fresh, exhilarating, and admirably worked out; the reprises are beautifully managed, and the instrumentation full of new and masterly effects.
>
> The first movement over, a murmur of praise and favourable criticism ran through the audience. According to all, Spohr had newly imbibed the waters of rejuvenescence.

After more description of the individual movements in which the slow movement was described as 'in every way worthy of Spohr's genius in its loftiest moments', and the finale as 'bright and fleeting as a flash of lightning', the critic concluded:

> We shall have occasion by-and-by to speak more largely of this work; at present we can hardly allude to it impartially, so deeply were we impressed with it on a first hearing. The trio gave the most intense delight as to its merits.[16]

But clearly, despite the high regard in which his works were still held by

connoisseurs and the enthusiasm of select audiences, Spohr's larger works and his chamber music received fewer performances than his exalted reputation would seem to have warranted compared with the frequency of performance of works by the composers with whom he was most often ranked. In 1850, when The Musical World reviewed a Musical Union concert at which the Double Quartet in E minor had been played, it remarked:

> A more careful and effective execution of a work which displays in lavish abundance almost every kind of musical beauty it is in the province of chamber music to combine, could hardly have been desired. Amidst the just admiration accorded to Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, their successor, amateurs and critics are too prone to overlook or under-estimate the genius and acquirements of Spohr, the most accomplished composer of instrumental music now living, and in every way worthy to be associated with the four great musicians we have named.[17]

The reviewer might fairly have added concert-givers to his list of those who overlooked or under-estimated Spohr's music. Nor does it appear that the works chosen for performance in chamber concerts were always those most calculated to show Spohr in his best light. The introduction of the Quatuors Brillantsop.68 and op.61 in Moliques concerts on March 6 and 21 1850 is an example of this. On the first occasion The Musical World observed;

> Spohr's quartet is light and brilliant, but not interesting enough for its length. We know very many of his infinitely superior; and so does Herr Molique, whose reason for introducing it puzzles us.[18]

At the next concert these strictures were repeated and 'a preference for Spohr's real quartets, where every performer has an equal share of the work' was expressed.

In general, therefore, it seems certain that Spohr's music was relatively under-represented in the sort of concert which was intended for the cultivated amateur; and in view of the supposedly non-popular character of his compositions, it would be hardly surprising if this were found to apply in even greater measure to concerts which were intended for a wider, less musically educated audience. Observations on this non-popular aspect of his music, which had been common during the 1820's and early 1830's, had subsequently been less conspicuous; but in the early 1850's they began to be voiced again.

The Ninth Symphony, The Seasons, was first performed in 1850, at the Grand National Concerts. These concerts were one of the first attempts in England to bring serious music to a wide audience at a reasonable price, though this had been anticipated by Jullien's occasional 'classical concerts'. The Daily News remarked:

> It made very little impression, - a thing we were quite prepared to expect; for, with all his genius and attainments as an artist, this illustrious composer has never possessed much power of pleasing a popular audience.[19]

And of the same performance The Spectator commented:

> The directors of these concerts are entitled to the thanks of every amateur for having brought forward this last work of the greatest musician living; though, in the present state of public taste, it is certainly not a work for a great popular audience.[20]

The recurrence, after a period of dormancy, of the sort of opinions illustrated by these reviews highlights the changing conditions which the growth of popular classical concerts signalised.

The expansion of concert-giving in general had continued unabated in the 1840's, and by 1850 Chorley was complaining that 'The number of chamber concerts is increasing so largely in London that they are hardly to be dealt with as their musical importance demands'.[21] The concerts he referred to were the kind of events at which Spohr's music was likely to feature on the bill, and in 1852 The Dramatic and Musical Review also remarked approvingly on the 'increase in the number of concerts having for their object the cultivation or gratification of a taste for the higher order of music'.[22] Increasingly in the 1850's there were attempts to bring classical music to the people at a price they could afford, with such concert series as the Monday Popular Concerts giving chamber music at St James's Hall, The New Philharmonic Society, The Grand National Concerts and perhaps most importantly The Crystal Palace Concerts at Sydenham. This expansion was probably encouraged at this time by the beginning of an economic boom which lasted from the early 1850's until the 1870's: Thomas Tooke, a contemporary statistician and perceptive commentator on economic matters, recorded his 'unfeigned astonishment' at the 'stolidity

and vastness of amelioration in the state of Great Britain'[23] at the beginning of this period, and undoubtedly any increase in general prosperity must have given encouragement to speculation in concert-giving as in other fields. Chorley commented in 1850: 'For the moment there seems no limit to enterprise in the cause of classical music'.[24] Naturally the works of a composer who was considered by most authorities to be the greatest then living would be included in such concerts, but there is no doubt that the admitted lack of popular appeal in Spohr's music tended to lead to the performance of a handful of time-tested works and to discourage initiative in taking up the symphonies and overtures which even the Philharmonic Society had neglected. What is more, the acknowledged difficulty of Spohr's orchestral works must have been a restricting factor for orchestras which could not command the same high quality of players as the Philharmonic; nor, on a slender financial basis, would adequate rehearsal be given for works which were not reasonably well known to the players. Deficiencies in the latter respect were a common complaint of critics, and in 1850 The Morning Post commented acidly about the Grand National Concerts: 'conductors as well as performers have an insuperable aversion to such slow things as rehearsals'.[25] The net result, as is shown by the rendering of Spohr's Seasons symphony at those concerts under Balfe's conductorship, was that the performance was poor and the audience reaction correspondingly cool. Chorley remarked on the 'slack way in which Dr Spohr's composition was disposed of by Mr Balfe', and went on to say that

> The symphony did not produce the slightest effect:- perhaps because it was rendered with such utter indifference. But we fear that the best endeavours could not make us think it one of Dr Spohr's happier works.[26]

Chorley may have been right in his assessment of the composition, but it is very likely that any lack of effect would be blamed on the music even more readily by an audience the majority of whom probably had little understanding of musical technicalities and little if any experience of what a good performance should sound like. On the other hand, the seriousness and receptiveness of a popular Victorian audience should not be underrated. If they did not have a fully informed appreciation of the complexities of the music they were

listening to, they can still be expected to have treated it with the respect they were led to believe it deserved. Some such reaction would seem to be at the back of the not infrequent remarks that a performance of one of Spohr's works had achieved a 'succes d'estime'.[27] Certainly it seems that the audience at the Grand National Concerts was respectful if not enthusiastic, towards Spohr. The Musical World observed:

> A more attentive audience than that of Monday night could not have "stood" (the greater number of them were in the promenade during the execution of the symphony) in judgement on a new work. The applause at the end of the several movements was not less discriminately than heartily bestowed.[28]

And this was at the performance of a work which none of the critics considered worthy of the composer.

In its assessment of the music The Musical World had concluded that 'The Seasons appears to exhibit all the peculiar mannerisms of style that make the music of Spohr so easily recognizable, but little of the fancy, melodic flow, and dramatic expression to which it owes its reputation'. The Morning Post similarly remarked that

> The Symphony is thoroughly Spohrish in its character. It may be taken as fair sample of the celebrated master's general style, for it affords numerous examples of his peculiar beauties and defects. We remark in it the same luscious chromatic harmonies repeated to satiety, the same elaboration of details, the exquisite instrumentation and provoking monotonous phraseology which distinguish most of his works.[29]

But The Spectator, though not enthusiastic about the composition felt bound to observe that

> To those who venerate the genius of Spohr, it is ever gratifying to meet with a new effort of his powers, - not displaying, indeed, all the freshness of his youth or all the strength of his manhood, yet such as he alone of living musicians could have made: for Spohr is truly "ultimus Romanorum" - the last of the great symphonists, the last successor of Bach and Handel in the oratorio, and the last dramatic writer of the pure German school of Gluck and Mozart. When he dies, these high walks of his art will be vacant, for no one seems coming forward to follow in his footseps.[30]

On the same lines, too, The Musical World reiterated its continued faith in Spohr's pre-eminence among living composers, with the assertion:

> While we have endeavoured, in this hasty sketch, to show that in the symphony of the Seasons, Spohr has not altogether maintained his usual height, that the passages of inspiration are rare, and that only one movement of the four ("Spring") is entirely beautiful, we must not omit to qualify our objections with the acknowledgement that, in all probability, no other living composer could have produced an orchestral work of such large outline, ingenious detail, and rich instrumental colouring. But Spohr has taught us, by previous essays, to expect so much, that the announcement of a new symphony from his pen is almost tantamount to the promise of a new chef d'oeuvre for the art. That we have been disappointed on the present occasion cannot be denied; but if "Homer nods" at intervals, why not Dr. Spohr?[31]

This performance of the Ninth Symphony prompted The Musical World to publish an article in which the question of Spohr's position in the musical world was discussed at length. From the style of the article it seems almost certain that the author was Davison and if so it is clear that the doubts which he had expressed about certain aspects of Spohr's work in his review of the Third Symphony earlier in the year seemed to him to be serious enough to require a more thorough examination. Also, taken in context with other criticisms of Spohr and the state of public interest at the time (as indicated by comments such as the review quoted above p.182), it is likely that Davison was concerned, by giving an appraisal of Spohr's strengths together with an admission of his weaknesses, to refute more serious denigrations of his reputation. The article is of considerable interest as an indication of the current thinking of perhaps the most influential critic of the day, and particularly so in view of the shift of attitude and the uncertainty which it implies; it is therefore worth quoting at length.

The article is headed 'Spohr's Seasons', but after a short paragraph in which different poetic and musical versions of the Seasons are referred to, Davison abandoned any mention of the symphony and launched into a general discussion of Spohr's merits as follows:

> What is there in Spohr that one should dare to say "Spohr is not as great a man as any of the great musicians?" What is it, when Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn are mentioned in a breath - what is it that prevents us from at once adding the name of Spohr to the illustrious quintet? The subtle in discriminating musical excellence will own that

this is a difficult question to answer. We proclaim ourselves incompetent to suggest a reason. Spohr is so much beyond all others, except the five, or perhaps, more strictly speaking, he is so often equal to the five in their moments of inspiration, that we feel loth not at once to place him on the sixth pedestal. Spohr is a great master; none can deny it; and to say a great master is not to say a small thing. We do not say - that is the few that judge do not say - Rossini is a great master, or Auber is a great master, or even Weber is a great master, who was nearer the mark than either. In these men, with all their genius, we find not that intense and irrepressible love of the art, for the sake of the art alone, which is surely an essential quality in the distinction. We find everything except the power which can only be acquired by its possession. But that Spohr possesses it, his life and works have shown. It is the noblest and the rarest of all the qualities which, summed together, make the supreme musician. Spohr has genius also; does any one doubt it who is able to detect originality of style - does any one doubt it who can estimate the influence of his works on the composers of our time? Genius, and a real and disinterested love of art. Here are the two most enviable qualities. Spohr has the desire and the power to write great music, and he has written great music. By great we do not mean beautiful, or dramatic - for these and more can be said of the celebrated men we have cited - but that which unites these and many other things, that which can alone be compassed by the highest gifts and the most indomitable will, combined. Spohr has compassed this and has thereby cleared himself entirely from the herd, from whom he stands apart, as the moon at night from the lesser stars, no matter what may be their brightness. If a man had written a finer poem than Paradise Lost, amidst many other things inferior to other poems of Milton, that man would be a greater man than Milton. Let us apply this maxim, which we suppose to be irrefutable, to Spohr, in comparing him with Rossini, a man of splendid genius, more celebrated perhaps than Spohr, certainly more celebrated in the eyes of the world. How many will say, and not unreasonably, that Spohr has neither the fluent melody nor the dramatic colouring of Rossini. It is proved in his operas, which, compared with the best of the Italian master, are deficient in brilliancy, overcharged with unnecessary elaborations, and inferior in dramatic effect. The most zealous of Spohr's advocates would hardly refuse to own a truth so easily demonstrated by comparison. We, who, without being able to give a tangible reason at a breath, have a greater respect for Spohr than Rossini, and prefer him as a composer, shall not attempt to confute it. And yet we must assert, in support of our argument, that in the operas of Spohr (all their "heaviness" allowed), there are certain things beyond the highest flight of Rossini - things which Rossini could never have reached, because it was not in him, or of him, to reach them..... Yet we are ready to confess that the Barber of Seville and William Tell afford us more absolute pleasure than Jessonda and Faust. That this pleasure may be sensual we will not deny; in respect to the Barber of Seville, we are sure it is; and that the purely mental delight attached to the more elevated beauties of Spohr's operatic music, demanding greater pains and attention to be enjoyed, is often neglected by ourselves, like the rest of the world, for the other. We look upon it that few straighforward picture-seekers, if they gave an honest confession of their feelings, but would own to a far greater pleasure in the pictures of Landseer than in those

of finer masters, whose subjects are less "ad captandum,"- to employ a current expression. Fewer straighforward music-lovers but feel and own, if they be honest, a similar preference for the music of Rossini over that of Spohr. We are quite aware that the Italian has more charms for the multitude than the German, but, at the same time, we insist that little importance should be attached to such distinctions where grave questions of art are concerned. There were many who preferred Salieri to Mozart, and there are many who prefer Donizetti to the same immortal genius. Not that we compare either Salieri or Donizetti to Rossini. Truth forbid we should.

Thus much avowed, thus much compared, we may return to our original proposition. If a man had written a finer poem than Paradise Lost, amidst many things inferior to other poems of Milton, that man would be a greater man than Milton. Applying the maxim to Spohr and Rossini, we begin with the assertion that Spohr has composed divers works which it is plainly impossible Rossini could ever have composed, because he has not the art. But, on the other hand, we cannot assert that Rossini has composed divers works which Spohr could never have composed, because he has not the invention. Spohr has not composed them it is true, but why, we cannot undertake to decide. That Rossini has not the art of Spohr may be established by a comparison of the overtures to the operas of the two men; but that Spohr has not the invention of Rossini cannot be established by any just comparison. Whatever genius may have been exerted in the creation of Guillaume Tell, that which gave birth to Die Wiehe der Töne is still of a higher and more brilliant order; and who for one instant would hesitate to admit that the symphony, so called, is something which Rossini, with all his genius, could never have composed; and who would not hesitate to admit that the Guilliume Tell, or anything else by Rossini, could never have been composed by Spohr, with all his art![32]

From this it is clear that whatever reservations Davison might have had about the extent of Spohr's genius, he was still far from agreeing with Chorley's assessment. Their attitude over a performance of the Double Quartet in D minor at the Musical Union in 1851 neatly illustrates the gulf which separated them and probably also represents a corresponding divergence of public opinion. Davison was full of praise for the work, commenting:

> The double quartets are among the most remarkable of Spohr's compositions for the chamber, and although the one in E minor has obtained the largest share of popularity, that in D minor...is, in our opinion, the best.[33]

And this was followed by a highly appreciative account of the music. But Chorley, whose remarks also confirm the relative unfamiliarity of the composition, observed disparagingly:

> The least known work performed at the second concert of the Musical Union was Spohr's double quartet in D minor Op.65:- a composition containing good passages, diversified by ingenious contrivances, - but slight in idea and mannered in construction to a degree hardly credible to those less exercised in analysis than it is the critic's duty to be.[34]

Nevertheless, in 1851 Spohr's music could still excite the admiration of a Philharmonic audience as is shown by a review of the Third Philharmonic concert of that season, at which the overture and introduction to Jessonda were performed. The critic remarked:

> Old Spohr came out like a giant refreshed. His overture, one of the best of overtures dramatic, was finely played and loudly encored, his introduction..."went" well, and the audience relished it exceedingly.[35]

The First Symphony, too, given at the Philharmonic concert of May 12 roused the poetic enthusiasm of a critic in The Morning Chronicle who exclaimed:

> Spohr's sinfonia, which opened the performance of the evening, was given with exquisite precision, and in particular the scherzo allegro went with the most delicious vivacity, its waves of melody being incessantly sprinkled, as it were, with tiny and sparkling raindrops rapidly absorbed in the main flood, but each for the instant leaving its image on the sense.[36]

And The Times observed of the same performance:

> The symphony was received with great favour. Either Spohr is coming into fashion, or the subscribers are getting sick of the toujours perdrix system; whichever be the case there is reason for congratulation.[37]

Also as a composer for the violin Spohr's supremacy seems to have been generally recognised in the 1850's, and this was one area at least in which Chorley could be counted among his admirers. He expressed his position in a review of a performance of the violin duet op.39 no. 1 at the Quartet Association in 1852. In the course of his notice he implied that there was a distinct falling off of interest in Spohr's larger works, but also indicated that there remained an identifiable band who were unshaken in their admiration for his works as a whole, saying:

> Spohr's concertante duet - excellently played by M. Sainton and Mr. Cooper, - was a great treat. Indiscriminate admirers of its writer will be shocked at our judgement that in these compositions written with a special purpose, and not in those where the thought

> is of more and the player of less consequence, lies Dr. Spohr's true claim upon posterity. Though the world may be less enamoured than formerly of his symphonies, double quartets, oratorios and operas, from having discovered how few varieties of design they contain... so long as violins exist, ears will be made alert, attention quickened, and interest kept alive by Dr. Spohr's concertos and unaccompanied duets, - since, of their kind, they are masterpieces, alike elegant, ingenious, expressive, and calculated to afford due scope to executive display.[38]

There were many, though probably not Chorley among them, who would boldly have asserted Spohr's claim to be unchallengeably the greatest compser ever for the violin. This was certainly the case with the critic of The Spectator in 1850. In a review of a performance of Mendelssohn's violin concerto by Ernst, he upheld Spohr's claims even against the tremendous popularity of this work and in spite of the growing Mendelssohn worship. He stated:

> it was a musical treat of the highest order. But when we find this concerto placed, by Mendelssohn's fanatical worshippers, above all other compositions of its class, and those of Spohr in particular, we can only say that such indiscriminate eulogy is merely injurious to its object. A composer cannot write a highly finished concerto for an instrument of which he is not himself a complete master. If he is a great musician he may produce something which no mere performer, however, accomplished, could equal. But when he comes into comparison with another musician equally great with himself and at the same time a finished performer, he must necessarily stand at a disadvantage. The violin has very rarely been the instrument of a great composer; Spohr is the only musician of our day who can be classed on the one hand with Mozart and on the other with Viotti; and the concertos composed and played by the author of Jessonda stand quite alone and unrivalled. Independently of their grandeur and beauty of conception, they have, even in the midst of difficulties, that graceful flow and smoothness which can be obtained only by a profound knowledge of the fingerboard, and a command of all the delicacies of the bow. In Mendelssohn's concerto, the most difficult passages were the least effective, because they were constructed in comparative ignorance of the mechanism of the instrument. That lamented artist has no warmer admirers than ourselves; but the author of Elijah does not need to be extolled beyond measure as the composer of a violin concerto.[39]

But notwithstanding this sort of attempt to uphold Spohr's reputation, it seems likely that in the long run the posthumous growth of Mendelssohn's popularity was an important factor in the decline of Spohr's. While both had been alive propriety had tended to inhibit the exaltation of the younger composer

over the elder; after Mendelssohn's death Spohr could confidently be called the greatest living composer, while Mendelssohn could be treated as one of the great departed, and there is little restriction on the worship of a dead hero. Chorley commented in 1852 on the rapidly increasing admiration for Mendelssohn, saying:

> The passion for Mendelssohn's music seems to grow week by week in England; indeed his manner once accepted we know of no writer whose admirers become more enamoured than his.[40]

A discussion of the effect of Mendelssohn's popularity on Spohr's took up part of a review in The Musical World of a performance of the Second Symphony at the Philharmonic Society on May 31 1852. Again the writer was almost certainly Davison and the article clearly shows once more his admiration for Spohr and his belief that Spohr's genius was still underestimated, though it also demonstrates that he had now no doubts about ranking Mendessohn as a greater composer. The article is particularly important, too, for its identification of Spohr as the predominant influence on young musicians in the 1830's, and for the picture it gives of the high level of enthusiasm which had existed at that time and its subsequent decline. He wrote:

> The symphony of Spohr, composed for the Philharmonic Society more than a quarter of a century ago, although one of the masterpieces of its composer, has been more rarely brought forward than many works of less importance by inferior composers. That Spohr is the only orchestral writer worthy of being placed by the side of the four great masters - Haydn Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn - cannot admit of a doubt. Equally true it is that his influence on modern art has been as great as that of Weber, and almost as great as that of Mendelssohn. When mediocre parodies of Beethoven went out of fashion, and exaggerations of Weber - himself an exaggeration - began to pall upon the ear, the reign of Spohr commenced. Like all who invent an original style, Spohr found numberless disciples. His manner was imitated, and in the absence of original inspiration, pale copies, or extravagant travesties of his peculiarities, were palmed upon the world as efforts of genius and profundity. Every German composer adopted, as well as lay in his power, the method of instrumentation, the style of harmony and modulation (both remarkable for excess), of the great musician - precursor of the greater Mendelssohn. Spohr was the predominating type, and whatever he produced was multiplied, in a diluted form, by countless parasites. At the moment when his power was at the highest, the symphony in D minor, composed expressly for the Philharmonic Society, became the admiration of the exclusive world of music.

> Little understood, and not appreciated by the public at large, the admirable and, in its way, unequalled composition, was regarded by a large class of musicians as the nucleus of the secrets of the art - as the true example of excellence. The progress of taste, the decay which invariably springs from close familiarity, of the purely extrinsic charm, and, above all, the more absorbing influence of Mendelssohn's genius, which gave birth to an entirely new and legitimate feeling in music, in the course of time, however, weakened, and at length destroyed, this absolute art-tyranny; the symphony in D minor, and Spohr himself, stripped of artificial and conventional attractions, were reduced to their proper sphere and judged by laws universal and appertaining to all time. That the master and his work still retain in a great degree their early charm says much for both. It proves indisputably the genius of the one and the excellence of the other. We must confess to h ave received a deep impression from last Monday's performance by the Philharmonic band of the D minor symphony, which, in our opinion, cannot be too highly rated as a work of invention, and as a model of form. It is the essence of Spohr, and those who admire and venerate that eminent master must always hear it with delight. The first allegro is one of the most passionate movements ever written for the orchestra; the larghetto, in B flat as a specimen of glowing harmony and luxurious instrumentation has not been surpassed; the scherzo is extremely characteristic and dramatic; and the finale unites the playful fancy of Haydn to the richness and variety of the modern German School. The symphony was executed, under Mr. Costa's direction, in a manner calculated to give the fullest expression to its many beauties, and was keenly relished by the musical part of the audience, although not entirely understood by the general body of amateurs, who have much to acquire before they can decently aspire to pronounce judgement on so great an effort of art and genius combined.[41]

The information that even in 1852 a considerable proportion of the Philharmonic audience found such a long established work difficult to come to grips with, is significant. Their attitude is probably echoed in The Morning Herald's review of the concert, where it was stated that the symphony exhibited the 'resources of the scholar' rather than the 'inspiration of the poet', and that 'though possessing many clever bits of contrivance, many delicious points of effect, it is not exempt from the charge of dryness and verbosity'.[42] This critic's view, however, was at odds with that of most of his colleagues, who still tended to rank it as a great masterpiece, and a review in The Morning Chronicle is much more representative of the sort of comment the symphony elicited in the press. This critic, in an entirely eulogistic notice, enthused:

> A composition more full of richness of musical idea is

> rarely heard. Phrase after phrase - luscious with colour, and pregnant with significance - is evolved, played with in all the exhuberance of sportive imagination, tricked out in all the hues which the most gorgeous instrumentation could devise, and only, as it would seem, dismissed to make way for the crowd of "thick coming fancies" which in their irresistable march force their predecessors aside.[43]

Thus, on the eve of Spohr's penultimate visit to England, there were still many musicians who held him in high esteem and few who, whatever criticisms they might make of certain aspects of his music, would seriously have challenged his claim to be regarded as the greatest living composer. But there was, nevertheless, a very different undercurrent of feeling from that which had obtained just prior to his visit nine years earlier. Then, his reputation appeared still to be growing, and the addition of fresh laurels to his brow, in the shape of new works of major importance did not seem unlikely. The Piano Sonata, the Piano Trios and Piano Quintet made a favourable initial impact, but in the long run did not secure a wide circulation; the Eighth and Ninth Symphonies had been little short of failures. By 1852 therefore it must have been clear that Spohr's creative span was effectively over, and that, as The Daily News had remarked in 1850 'his permanent fame will rest on the works of his earlier days'.[44] Even his most ardent admirers could hardly uphold the later works, and nothing creates so unfavourable an impression as apparently exhausted creativity. To deny the vitality of the late works entirely, particularly the Piano Trios, would be unfair, for they contain much that is original and effective; but the artistic creed which they represented, along with all his works, was becoming increasingly out of tune with the feelings of the age.

Spohr's Visits to London in 1852 and 1853

Spohr's last two visits to England were prompted by the intention of the Royal Italian Opera to mount productions of Faust and Jessonda. This was in accordance with their recently instituted policy of producing several non-Italian operatic masterpieces each season, though these had to be in Italian

versions. The Musical World considered that the cause of this policy 'must simply be traced to the dearth of good Italian composers', and noted in 1853 that 'The most successful and profitable of the foreign operas which, during the last seven years, have been engrafted upon the Italian stage, Fidelio excepted, are those borrowed from the French stock'; but it remarked that

> The thoroughly German works, on the other hand, courting attention chiefly to their elaborate and magnificent music, have hitherto been less happy in gaining proselytes among the public of the Italian Opera - a public, it must not be forgotten, in most respects essentially different from that which flocks to the sacred and secular concerts at Exeter Hall.[45]

When the overture and introduction to Jessonda had been given at the Philharmonic in 1851 The Morning Chronicle commented:

> This great and thoroughly dramatic work of Spohr has been once or twice given in this country by one of the German operatic companies, who have paid us flying visits, but it well deserves a trial at the hands of one of our established lyric theatres.[46]

The plan to bring out Spohr's two greatest operas at the Royal Italian Opera, under the superintendence of the composer, therefore, was undoubtedly one which would be favourably received in musical circles.

Faust was proposed for production in 1852, but first it was felt necessary to provide it with recitatives, since it had originally been written with spoken dialogue. Spohr was applied to and, at first, he refused; on being pressed, however, he relented and agreed to undertake the adaptation of the opera. The resulting version is, in fact, a distinct improvement on the original, for in adding accompanied recitatives Spohr was enabled to give much greater unity to the opera by the use of leitmotivs.

Spohr arrived in London at the end of June, when the musical season was already well under way, and therefore missed the Philharmonic performance of his Second Symphony. But he was able to attend the last Philharmonic concert of the season on June 28, where his overture to Jessonda was one of the items to be performed. Even Chorley confessed that it was 'encored with enthusiasm', and observed that Spohr had been 'greeted as the veterans of sterling art should

be greeted in England.[47] Davison waxed more lyrical in his description of the event, saying:

> The graphic and spirited overture to the opera of Jessonda was played by the band, under Mr Costa, with a verve and entrain (to use two very convenient French terms) which roused the audience to an unusual display of feeling. The illustrious composer, Spohr, was in the room, and the applause continued so long that he felt compelled to rise from his place and acknowledge the compliment paid to his music. The sight of his venerable and commanding figure redoubled the vehemence of the demonstration, and an ovation was paid to the man of genius worthy of himself and of the audience, who knew so well how to appreciate him. The overture was then redemanded by the whole room, and at the conclusion Spohr again got up and made his obeisance to the assembly.[48]

At Exeter Hall the Sacred Harmonic Society mounted a performance of Calvary on July 5, at which the composer was among the audience. The partisans of the work had apparently so far overcome the religious prejudices which it aroused as to induce the Society to perform it in Spohr's honour, probably as a recompense for its cancellation in 1847. That the religious scruples were not entirely overcome however, is indicated by remarks in The Morning Chronicle's and The Morning Herald's reviews of the performance.

The critics were divided broadly into two camps. In one were those who considered the work to be fatally flawed and inferior to The Last Judgement: in the other were those the oratorio seems to have won over completely, some of whom considered it Spohr's greatest sacred work. Chorley stood somewhat apart from both groups, for his notice avoided any mention of the music, consisting entirely of an explanation of why he did not intend to review it. His attitude is interesting, and it indicates the strength of the feelings of respect which, by his presence, Spohr could induce even in so stern a critic; though at the same time there is no doubt of his continued dislike of Spohr's music. He stated:

> During the last fifteen years it has been among our musical duties frequently and freely to discuss the value of Dr Spohr's talent, and the place among German composers to which it entitles him. Few among our readers, then, can be unacquainted with our opinions and their grounds - few we imagine, will fail to understand why, on the present visit to England of an artist whose long career, however,

> self concentrated, has been as self-consistent and worthy - we decline anew to analyze the known compositions performed under his direction and in his presence. The best criticism is sometimes a courteous respect shown to those who throughout many epochs of change and distemperature have persisted in treating art as art, neither as a mere toy for play nor as a tool to dig up money withal.[49]

Davison also showed deference towards the composer, but openly voiced his reservations about the composition. However, these criticisms were qualified in a way which demonstrates a clear difference of opinion with Chorley. After explaining his grounds for objection, commenting that 'The composer is prodigal of his mannerisms, his orchestration is laboured and cloying, his modulation inordinate, his use of chromatic harmony inordinate and a general want of contrast is felt throughout', he acknowledged:

> On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that, whatever its weaknesses, there is possibly no other living composer capable of writing an oratorio of such magnitude and pretensions. Many of the pieces will most probably live when the oratorio itself is forgotten, and of how few works of the same order, putting aside those of Handel and Mendelssohn, can even this be said.[50]

The Morning Herald and The Morning Chronicle criticised the oratorio for monotony of effect and for its similarity to The Last Judgement, and both mentioned objections to it on the grounds of religious propriety. The Morning Chronicle observed that the performance left much to be desired, but turned even this against the music, saying:

> There was a degree of cautious groping in the execution which, with such forces as the Sacred Harmonic can command, was sufficient evidence of the extreme crankyness and crabbedness of portions of the music, during the performance of which the ear in vain sought to grasp an intelligible rhythm, and to realise a finished idea of the shadowy structure passing like a dark sensation away.[51]

Among the oratorio's supporters The Daily News critic was one of its most forceful advocates. The writer of this notice can, from the opinions expressed, be confidently identified with the critic who reviewed the work's Norwich performance in 1839 in The Morning Chronicle; it was therefore almost certainly Hogarth. He felt that 'considering that it is one of the most important works of the greatest musician now living, we could have expected that the Sacred Harmonic Society would have performed it long before now'. He, like the

previously mentioned critic, commented on the lack of decision in the performance, but his attitude to this was radically different from that of his colleague. Hogarth had heard the 1839 performance under Spohr's direction and its perfection had been a revelation to him, banishing the sort of reservation about the work's performability that his successor on The Morning Chronicle was once again expressing. On this occasion, after enumerating the defects of the performance, Hogarth remarked:

> Hence, some of the finest passages...fell more coldly on the ear of the audience than we could have expected. These defects, however, will disappear when the oratorio becomes familiar to the performers. This, however, will require, on their part, both time and trouble...his difficulties are worth the pains requisite to surmount them; and his works, thoroughly studied and completely performed will be found full of the grandest conceptions, and the most exquisite beauties of every kind.[52]

And he concluded his review with the optimistic prediction: 'we have no doubt that "Calvary" will become one of the stock-pieces of the Sacred Harmonic Society'. In fact, it was not performed in London again until 1887.

The critic of The Morning Post was another staunch supporter of the work. He prefaced his notice with a short account of Spohr's career, in which he called him 'the Magnus Apollo of our musical world', and, though he too had much criticism to make of the performance, he reviewed the work itself in glowing terms, exclaiming at one point that the chorus 'What threatning tempest' was 'one of the most sublime compositions which the modern school can boast, and is quite sufficient in itself to stamp Spohr as a composer of the highest class'.[53] Equally, if not more enthusiastic, was the critic of The Spectator, and his view of its difficulties in performance was similar to Hogarth's. He observed:

> It is more elaborately written than "The Last Judgement," with a less familiar strain of melody; while it contains nothing that relieves and stimulates the ear like the gorgeous barbaric music in the "Fall of Babylon." But it will be found in the long run, we believe, to be even greater than either. Of all Spohr's works it is the grandest in conception, the most profoundin thought, and the most masterly in construction. The new and original forms, the chromatic and unusual intervals given to the voices, and the complicated richness of harmony and

> instrumentation render it excessively difficult for all the performers; but when its difficulties are surmounted in the orchestra, every effect will be perfectly clear and intelligible to the audience.[54]

The response of the audience, notwithstanding the ineffectivness of the performance, was highly enthusiastic, and seems to have been far more in tune with the second group of critics than the first. The Morning Herald noted that a large number of the audience came with copies of the work which were issued by the Sacred Harmonic Society at 'little more than the cost of the paper'.[55] (The Sacred Harmonic Society on taking over publication of the work from Edward Taylor, had reduced the price from 30s to 10s per copy; see The Athenaeum, 1852 p. 707.) This implies that many of the audience were musically literate and therefore more likely to appreciate the technical complexities of the work. The Morning Chronicle, which in view of its cool reception of the oratorio can be expected to be an impartial authority, described the scene at the end of the performance in the following terms:

> At the conclusion of the oratorio a loud round of acclamation was given for the venerable author, who mildly and dignifiedly bowed his acknowledgements of the greeting from one of the side galleries. The applause was raised again and again, and Spohr received a continued ovation as he proceeded along the staircases and corridors.[56]

After such obviously genuine enthusiasm it seems inexplicable that Calvary should have had to wait 35 years for another performance in London, unless it was on account of the religious objections.*

It was, however, not Calvary, but Faust which was the prime focus of attention during this visit. Anticipation was particularly high on account of the rarity of performances of the opera in England. It had been produced only twice, in 1840 and again in 1849; on both occasions, especially the latter, the performances had left much to be desired. The Morning Chronicle observed: 'The Faust has long enjoyed in England one of those conventional reputations which are founded more on the report of the few than on the experience of the many',[57] and The Morning Herald remarked that there were 'few operas the component parts of which are in such general vogue'.[58] The

* This point was made by The Musical Times in 1887 (see below p. 230).

Musical World also noted that many of the individual numbers were 'as familiar to the musical world, and to amateurs in general, as anything from Der Freischutz'.[59] It is not surprising, therefore, that considerable interest should have been aroused by the possibility of seeing it produced under the baton of the composer. According to Cocks Musical Miscellany:

> The "event" of the month has been the arrival of Louis Spohr in this country to conduct his own celebrated opera of Faust. The first performance took place on the 15th of July under the direction of the composer, with a degree of perfection almost unprecedented in the annals of the Opera. To obtain that perfection, there were four full band rehearsals, under Spohr's own direction.[60]

The Musical World observed of the first performance, that:

> The house was crowded to suffocation. The event was a musical event in the strongest signification of the term, and almost all the musicians and amateurs of distinction, foreign and native, now in the metropolis, were present on the occasion. Dr. Spohr himself, the greatest conductor on the continent, presided in the orchestra.[61]

And The Morning Chronicle's account confirms that it was performed 'to one of the most crowded houses of the season, by whom it was received with genuine enthusiasm'. In fact, all the press reports mentioned its great success with the public; and its continued success during the season under Costa's baton, after Spohr had returned to Kassel, is indicated by comments in The Musical World, which reported that 'The beauties of this great work become more apparent with each successive hearing'.[62]

Despite the fact that Faust was, as The Morning Post put it, 'triumphantly successful' and that The Musical World could assert that 'Faust is already ranked among the "classics" of the art, and is likely to survive so long as music continues to be cultivated',(61) there were hints that the triumph might be more superficial than it seemed. The old comment about the non-popular character of Spohr's music was revived by The Morning Herald, which remarked: 'it has very few popular characteristics. Like all the other creations of Spohr it deals in the profundities of harmonisation, to the utter exclusion of simplicity and clearness';[63] and even the critic of The Spectator, who was generally among Spohr's most ardent partisans, felt it necessary to embroil

himself in a tortuous justification of the composer's complexities, arriving at the conclusion that

> What is in his mind falls freely from his pen; and, with him, the process of elaboration would consist of retrenchment, rather than accumulation. Spohr's fulness, like the features which mark the style of a Johnson or a Gibbon, proceeds from his natural disposition, and belongs to his individuality; and no musician has a more strongly-marked individuality than Spohr.[64]

On the other hand, the critic of The Morning Post, whose reviews of both Calvary and Faust were little short of eulogy, felt no need to justify the complexity of Spohr's music, upholding it, rather, as evidence of his profundity. He averred, after a reference to the aria 'Liebe ist die zart':

> This air alone is sufficient to entitle Spohr to the very highest rank as a vocal melodist; but the attractions are not here, as in the modern Italian School, confined to the outline only, for we have a rich luxuriance of harmony, an exquisite colouring and embellishment of the thought in the instrumentation, an original and enchanting use of transition tones, and the resources of chromatic progression, which, combined with the perfect appropriateness of expression which prevails throughout, serve to produce a result only to be realised by an union of the loftiest qualities of nature and art.[65]

A similar deprecation of the Italian school was implied in The Daily News which considered the production of Faust a hopeful sign of the times, and saw it as indicating an improvement of taste that 'a work so purely German as the "Faust" of Spohr should have been performed at an Italian opera house'.[66]

In its review of the opera The Musical World had commented that 'Its production last night has opened a new field well worth exploring; and its success may possibly induce the directors of the Royal Italian Opera to remember that there are eight or nine more works from the same hand comparatively unknown to the English public'. Evidently the directors of the Opera were not unmindful of this fact, and the announcement of Jessonda for the next season must have confirmed hopes, in the minds of those who identified good taste with German music, of an improvement of policy by the opera management. But the votaries of classical German music did not have the field entirely to themselves, as may be seen from the conflicting opinions which were voiced in

the press in relation to these two productions.

The probable impact of Spohr's music on a popular audience whose cultural background may have been very slender, has been touched upon in connection with the performance of his Seasons at the Grand National Concerts in 1850. The musical education of this group was one of the aims of the supporters of seriousness in art; the other group, towards which the attentions of the proselytising musical journalist had preponderantly been turned, however, was the aristocracy and upper class. The most obvious reason for this bias was that it was only this class who possessed money, leisure, and the tradition of large-scale musical entertainment. For more than a decade the aristocracy and that section of the upper class which aped their tastes and habits had come under the lash of writers such as Thackeray, for example in The Book of Snobs; and in musical matters their lack of discrimination had been assailed by a new breed of music critic. In 1838 The Analyst had commented:

> It has frequently been remarked, but with what truth we need not here determine, that the lower-middle class of English society are not merely leaving - they have already left - the aristocracy leagues in the rear upon all questions of intellectual refinement.[67]

In spite of these assaults, however, there remained a very substantial majority who had retained their traditional predilections for Italian Opera. Any selection of programmes of private concerts given by the Queen at Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle, or by members of the nobility in mid-century demonstrates that extracts from these same operas formed the staple ingredient of their entertainments. The county gentry were less sophisticated and had shown a preference for light ballads as well as Italian arias at the evening concerts of provincial festivals.

During the 1840's attacks on the taste of the upper class continued with unabated vigour in certain sections of the press, and some success was achieved, especially in raising the quality of the music given in the secular parts of provincial festivals. There was also some success in encouraging the

upper class to patronise serious concerts in London; though whether this was aided by the admonition of critics, or resulted rather from the natural response of inherent good taste to available good music, in a proportion of the upper class, is a moot point. It is probable that Ella's method of encouraging an interest in classical music in high society through his efforts with the Saltoun Club as early as the 1820's, and later with the Musical Union, working on the same sort of basis as the Concerts of Antient Music, was ultimately more productive. The Musical World recognised the potential of the Musical Union in fostering an improvement of taste saying in its characteristically barbed manner:

> Mr. Ella will lead the nobility and aristocracy to prize Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Spohr, and Mendelssohn for whom now, the majority appear to care as little as we do for the twelve labours of Hercules.[68]

In a tone more respectful towards his social superiors the critic of The Illustrated London News observed in 1847:

> It is by the exalted support given to the Musical Union, the Beethoven Society, the Amateur Musical Society etc. we arrive at the conclusion that, however, popular is the Italian Opera in this country, there is a real love of the higher order of composition amongst the elevated classes.[69]

And there is even a hint that Spohr may have become a particular favourite with the Amateur Musical Society (an orchestra containing the scions of noble families and including a handful of peers of the realm*) in the 1850's, for Chorley exclaimed in 1856:

> There is no keeping the band of our London Amateur Society off Dr. Spohr's music, possibly because it demands a merit which no amateur orchestra can command:- to wit, undeviating intonation.[70]

But despite these signs that classical music was coming more into vogue among some sections of the upper class, there is little to suggest that the enlightened policy of the Royal Italian Opera in producing such things as Faust and Jessonda found favour with the traditional supporters of Italian opera, or that it widened their musical horizons to any appreciable degree. Berlioz's Benvenuto Cellini, one of the other novelties of the 1853 season,

* In 1848 it included Lord Arundel (trumpet), the Duke of Leinster (flute), Lord Fitzgerald and the Marquis of Kildare (celli). /see ILN, xii(1848), 120/

given under its composer's baton, had been so roundly hissed on its first night that the composer was forced to withdraw it without a further performance. The necessity of substituting something else so delayed preparations for Jessonda that Spohr was obliged to leave for Kassel before it could be brought out, but the first performance, when it came, was considerably more successful than Berlioz's. There is no reason however, to imagine that this was because it was a more acceptable musical entertainment to the denizens of the boxes; probably the composer's venerable reputation was sufficient to ensure it a polite hearing, no doubt aided by the fact that Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the Royal children honoured it with their presence. A split in the attitudes of different sections of the audience was noted in The Musical World, where it was stated:

> Jessonda - like Faust, last season - obtained a succes d'estime. Liked and applauded by the connoisseurs and the general audience, it was patiently endured by the habitués of the stalls and grand tier boxes. Nevertheless, to the credit of all; it must be said, that even those who failed to understand and appreciate the music, listened to it with attention, and that no marks of impatience interfered with the execution and enjoyment of a work which has been acknowledged a chef d'oeuvre for upwards of 30 years, and belongs to the classics of the art.[71]

The campaign of musical journalists on behalf of classical music may have helped to induce respect if not appreciation among the bulk of the upper-class musical public, but by the 1850's much of the impetus had gone out of their efforts at conversion. One reason for this was that in the 1840's a new element which in the long run tended to lend respectability to the taste for less serious music, had appeared in the shape of hard-hitting support for it in the press. Holmes, Davison and the upholders of the classical German tradition had upbraided the devotees of what they considered light and unworthy music unchallenged for more than a decade; but one journalist, appearing on the scene in the early 1840's, whose taste undoubtedly inclined to the Italian and French schools, was Gruneisen. He had little grasp of musical science and had turned from war reporting in Spain to musical criticism. Whereas the other writers of fashionable operatic notices in the daily press

had blandly ignored the railings of the pro-German lobby, Gruneisen hit back. In 1844 he replied in The Maestro (a short-lived musical paper of which he was editor) to criticisms by Davison of the lack of support for good music by the Royal family and the nobility, saying:

> In certain circles - we will not call them cliques - the alleged want of patronage for music in this country is a standing theme for complaint, and is used as a weapon of attack on the highest classes in society. Even the throne itself has not been respected and exempt from the outcry.

Having defended Prince Albert on the grounds that 'he soars with the sublimities of Beethoven - he revels in the Mozartian melodies - he has a great affection for Mendelssohn - he respects Spohr', Gruneisen observed:

> We shall not discuss here what is to be regarded as the true standard of taste and excellence in art. In music, we wish that all amateurs and professors were cosmopolites and would recognise what is really beautiful, no matter of what school or of what country. If the intellect be dismayed at times by the gloomy grandeur of Beethoven, may not the imagination run riot for a moment at the melodious outpourings of a Bellini?[72]

Such broadmindedness did not seem praiseworthy to Davison and his allies, especially since it was combined with a thorough contempt for the efforts of English composers, whose support was another of their causes. Gruneisen remarked of Sterndale Bennett, for instance, 'The fact is, Mr. Bennett very much overrates the ordinary amount of ability wherewith Providence has blessed him',[73] and he denied that English music was neglected, since, in his opinion it did not exist.[74] Also, Gruneisen's writings in general made it clear that his sympathies inclined markedly more to Italian and French opera (excluding Berlioz) than to anything else. His real feelings were plainly demonstrated in an article* on the 1853 performance of Jessonda which appeared in The Field (a sporting journal), where he wrote:

> Each season some magnificent production, some famous and learned work, which is to eclipse all its predecessors, and to delight equally the simple and the sage, the frequenter of the Philharmonic and Exeter Hall, and the more frivolous amateur who prefers Rossini and Bellini to Beethoven or Mendelssohn - is announced months before-hand, as the great attraction of the season. Time passes on - the

* The article is signed 'G', and the style and opinions are consistent with Gruneisen's authorship.

> forthcoming wonder delays its appearance, but in the meantime is heralded with the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal of every variety of the puff preliminary. At last we get it - "Faust," "Benvenuto Cellini," "Jessonda," - and behold, like the Dead Sea apples, the fair promise resolves itself into dust and ashes.[75]

Davison's opinion of this sort of attitude was summed up in his contemptuous reference to the article as 'a piscatory bite at Spohr's Jessonda'.[76] Gruneisen also remarked in The Morning Chronicle that 'The success achieved on Saturday night by the production of the long promised Jessonda, must be pronounced one rather d'estime than d'enthousiasme'.[77] The subtle difference between the way Gruneisen used the term d'estime both here and in The Field, were he had commented 'a succès d'estime is the most that the composer can pretend to',[78] and its use by Davison in The Musical World review of the opera, neatly illustrates their opposing positions. Davison, while admitting the coolness of the regular opera-goers drew attention to the genuine appreciation of the general audience: Gruneisen appeared to ignore the latter, illustrating once again the identification of his attitudes with those prevailing among the majority of the upper class.

Some critics recognised that the attitudes which Gruneisen represented posed a serious threat to the ideals of good taste which they were concerned to foster. There is a feeling that some of the supporters of serious music were strongly on the defensive. To them such lapses of judgement as Hogarth's unfoundedly complacent assumption that the production of Spohr's operas heralded an improvement in taste may well have seemed almost as dangerous as Gruneisen's heresy. It appears to be against both the laxity of the one and the mischievous philistinism of the other that the critic of The Morning Post railed in a long digression in his review of Jessonda. Undoubtedly Gruneisen was a particular target of the attack, as the references to Meyebeer and the Italian school, two of Gruneisen's special causes, demonstrate. The critic's language was forceful, but there is more than a hint of desperation in his diatribe, and a feeling that the battle for good taste was rapidly being lost. He commented:

> The audition of a great work like Spohr's "Jessonda"... naturally suggests to us the questions why are such masterpieces heard so seldom? why are the loftiest productions of art constantly made to give way to productions of inferior merit? We are not going to assert that Spohr's "Jessonda" or his still better opera of "Faust" is equal to Mozart's "Don Giovanni," "Il Flauto Magico," "Idomeneo," or Beethoven's "Fidelio," but they both ring of the true metal, and are infinitely superior to the operas of Meyerbeer, Bellini, Donizetti or Verdi, and the same may be said of his "Der Berggeist " "Azor and Zemire," "Die Kreutzfahrer," and other dramatic works.
>
> We may be answered that a vitiated taste is the cause. Doubtless; but how did the taste become vitiated?... Artists and critics rule and direct it. These, then, and these alone are responsible for its errors - and the latter still more than the former. The nonsense which is daily written about music is almost incredible... Everything that is good in musical art is rapidly passing away - vulgar meaningless tunes, uproar, and clap-trap, have taken the place of the pure beauties of the great masters, and are accepted by the general public as evidence of genius. Had our public critics been always competent, and done their duty efficiently, this state of things would have been crushed in the bud, and the popular taste directed to higher objects. We should never have seen the corrupt though occasionally clever music of Meyerbeer extolled to the skies, or the abominations of the modern Italian school spoken of as works of genius.[79]

Despite such prophesies of doom, however, and Gruneisen's reference to the resolution of a fair promise into dust and ashes, there is evidence that the coolness of the upper-class opera audience which had acted as a damper on the first night of Jessonda, was noticeably mellowed at subsequent performances. Perhaps even the hardened habitués of the opera were won over by the well-known insinuating qualities of Spohr's music, for The Musical World remarked:

> The second performance of Spohr's Jessonda attracted a large audience on Tuesday evening, and the opera was received with more marked and distinguished favour than on the first night. The overture which was but partially applauded on Saturday, was warmly encored on Tuesday. Madam Bosio's song - unanimously encored on Saturday - was encored with equal unanimity on Tuesday; and Signor Belletti's aria was much more loudly bissed on the second than on the first night. Spohr's music is of that kind that must please more by greater familiarity. Its beauties are not superficial. They lie deep - not indeed beyond the vision, but away from a casual glance - but when seen they are well worth the observing. Let no man judge of Spohr's music after a single hearing, especially if his ear be accustomed to the smoothness and rippling flow of Italian melody, or the startling and irresistable effects of the music of the Huguenots and the Prophète.[80]

At the musical events which Spohr had attended or taken part in before his

departure on July 20, there had been no lack of spontaneous enthusiasm from the audience. At the Quartet Association concert which he attended on the day of his arrival in London, where his Nonet had been played, and at the eighth Philharmonic concert, where his Historical Symphony was given, he had been warmly applauded and obliged to rise from his seat to acknowledge the greeting. At the two New Philharmonic concerts which he conducted both he and his works were, according to The Musical World, received with an enthusiasm impossible to describe.[81] And at the last concert of the Musical Union his String Sextet op.140 was given a triumphant première; The Musical World described it as:

> a work which, while showing all the experience of age, displays in an astonishing degree that freshness and spontaneity which are supposed only to belong to youth. One of the last chamber compositions of Dr. Spohr, this sestet is equally one of the finest and most captivating of them all.[82]

Even Chorley's review was appreciative, and he concluded it with the remark: 'the sestett is one which will be always welcome whenever a specimen by the master is in request'.[83] Similar enthusiasm was shown at the Réunion des Arts meeting at which he was present on July 15, where he took the first violin part in his String Quintet in G op.33 no. 2 in place of Molique who was indisposed. This particular quintet had also made a very favourable impression at Ella's Musical Winter Evenings earlier in the year, when the scherzo had been encored and the whole piece so well received that, according to The Musical World:

> Emboldened by the decided success of the quintet, Mr. Ella in a spirited improvisation, informed the audience that it would be repeated at the fourth and last concert of the Musical Winter Evenings, an announcement which created unanimous satisfaction.[84]

This indicates that the enthusiasm of the audiences during his visit cannot simply be ascribed to Spohr's presence.

There is little to add about critical reactions to the works performed during this visit; reviewers mainly repeated the old familiar comments about the music, interlaced with suitable expressions of respect for the venerable composer. Some attitudes were softened, so that the Historical Symphony was more tolerantly reviewed than on previous occasions. The Musical World, for

instance, thought that though not worthy of its composer it was at least 'a work of great interest';[85] while Chorley described it more tolerantly than usual as 'a heavy pleasantry'.[86] The Seventh Symphony, however, which Spohr conducted at the New Philharmonic Concert made a considerable impression on most critics as well as on the audience. Many were reviewing it for the first time, as it had not been played in England since its first performance in 1842. In view of the preponderance of enthusiastic reviews, and audience reaction it is difficult to understand why it had been so neglected in the intervening years. Cocks Musical Miscellany remarked:

> Dr. Spohr's very remarkable symphony for two orchestras... was excellently performed, and listened to with enthusiasm. ... The bands were placed in different situations, in order to aid the effect, and the result was such as to exhibit this work as one of the greatest and noblest of Spohr's inspirations. Dr. Spohr was greeted by the large assembly with a homage as sincere as it was unbounded.[87]

Only a few contrary opinions were expressed towards the symphony and the Quartet Concerto which was performed with it. Hogarth, for example, whose dislike of programme music has been well documented, described it in The Daily News as 'the very coldest and driest of all his works';[88] while The Morning Chronicle (probably Gruneisen) was also distinctly unmoved, though it was admitted that 'The audience, however, applauded vehemently, and were evidently well pleased'.[89] Among the symphony's admirers, on the other hand, was The Musical World which observed: 'The conception of the whole symphony is in the highest degree poetical, and its general development worthy of Dr. Spohr, among whose greatest and most lasting works it will undoubtedly rank'[90]. The Morning Herald remarked that treatment of the theme is 'rich and varied, and the effect musically considered, is exquisite'.[91] But The Morning Post was perhaps its most eloquent partisan; its critic commenced with a long eulogy on the composer where he stated:

> were sufficient time and space allowed us, we know of no more profitable use to which it might be dedicated than that of duly celebrating the vast merits of one of the greatest of that noble line of classic composers which commenced with Haydn. Louis Spohr, like his renowned predecessors has excelled in every branch of musical art... It will be enough to state that his music is the best of the day, and that he is a complete master of orchestral resources, to prove his general superiority

over all his contemporaries.[92]

His conclusion on the concerto and the symphony, which he thought the greater composition of the two, was that since they were works which 'must delight and instruct the musical world, too much eulogy can scarcely be bestowed upon him'. In passing, this critic, who cast his net widely in the search for enemies of good taste, launched a dart at another group besides the Italian and French operatic composers whom he had attached in his review of Jessonda. He made great play of the fact that in his descriptive music Spohr did not violate 'absolute canons of beauty' and achieved far greater results than

> his present German contemporaries of the "aesthetical" school with all their hazy theories about poetical "inspiration," "objective music," and contempt for technical rules and established models, have yet done or are at all likely to do. With those gentlemen the subject is everything, the execution nothing.

The composers who were seen as the leaders of the 'aesthetical school' were Schumann and Wagner, while Liszt was considered to be Wagner's propagandist. The association of Schumann with Wagner is somewhat curious, for they had little in common except their literary proclivities and even these were employed towards very different ends; but clearly many English critics found them equally objectionable. In April 1853, for instance, Davison had used a performance of Schumann's Overture Scherzo and Finale at the Philharmonic as an occasion to make a general attack on the composers whom he felt were leading music astray. He remarked:

> Robert Schumann and Richard Wagner...are the representatives of what is at present styled the "aesthetic" school in Germany...of Wagner we expect to have an early opportunity of speaking; of Schumann we have been compelled to speak frequently; and as it has happened, never in terms of praise.

And after a long condemnation of the work in question he exclaimed:

> Oh, that a musical Pope would start up and write a musical Dunciad! Thus, and only thus, could the so called "aesthetic" school be exposed to the world in its proper light.[93]

In the long run the growth of enthusiasm for the music of these composers,

which all the critical might of Davison, Chorley* and many of their colleagues was unable to quell, was a very significant factor in the decline of interest in Spohr's music.

By 1854 the flimsy foundation of Spohr's reputation could not be concealed. There were undoubtedly still some who were completely captivated by his style, but the number of 'enthusiastic young musicians' - of whom Ella had observed in 1845 that 'we frequently see them in the excess of their infatuation, setting up Spohr exclusively as the idol of their art worship'[94] - had certainly dwindled. The enthusiasm of young musicians was now much more likely to be seized by the music of those whom the established critics so detested. At the same time the ardour of many of Spohr's erstwhile idolators had cooled progressively throughout the 1840's to affectionate respect tinctured with criticism, and the criticisms of those who like Chorley had never had much appreciation of his music were sharpened. In his Modern German Music published in 1854 Chorley devoted a whole chapter to Spohr in which he set out the most extensive and severe criticism of the composer that had yet appeared from his pen, commencing with the observation that the influence which Spohr had 'exercised on his art in Europe is already proved to have been partial or curiously transitory'.[95] And his increasing revulsion for Spohr's music is also apparent in his 1854 review of the B minor Concertante op.88, which he described as 'one of its author's drier and more mechanical concert pieces',[96] in sharp contrast to his highly appreciative review of the same work in 1845 (see p.164 above). Of declining admiration, Davison is a prime example. as a comparison of successive notices of the same works indicates. Reviewing the Philharmonic Society's performance of Die Weihe der Töne in 1854, he reprinted as part of his review substantially the same article that had appeared in The Musical Examiner and The Musical World in 1843, but with some alterations. The first sentence

* Chorley's aversion to Wagner's music was as strong as Davison's. In Modern German Music, discussing the events of 1848, he wrote: '1848 also witnessed the production of certain musical dramas by one who has since made some noise in the world, and who is likely to make more - noise, strictly speaking - not music'. (op.cit., i, 348)

of the 1854 version[97], for instance, read: 'The Power of Sound is in many respects one of the noblest creations of the musical art', not as in 1843: 'This symphony may be considered as one of the noblest creations of the human mind'; and the reference to the March in 1854 as:'one of the most exhilarating things in the range of music', had been even more eulogistic in1843, saying that it was: 'next to the finale of the C minor or Beethoven, the most exhilarating thing in the whole range of music'. (The reference to Beethoven was entirely omitted in the later version.) These qualifications and omissions are minor but significant. With respect to the Third Symphony, too, even in the period between the 1850 and 1855 performances, Davison's opinion seems to have undergone a change; for his review on the former occasion was distinctly more appreciative than on the latter, where he referred to it as 'by no means one of his most brilliant efforts'. And his general verdict was that:

> There is a monotony about it which...is hardly once dissipated; and in no other orchestral work are the peculiar mannerisms that distinguish the style of its composer so abundantly displayed. The bright and happy inspiration of Beethoven /Fourth Symphony/...formed a grateful contrast.[98]

Only for his particular favourite, the Second Symphony, was his enthusiasm entirely unabated, and he described it in 1854 as 'Spohr's perfect symphony - perfect in form, in sustained interest, in the contrast and balance of its various movements, and in the unceasing beauty of its ideas', while he remarked of its performance at the Orchestral Union that: it was 'one of the richest treats that has for a long time been provided the amateurs of orchestral music' and observed of the audience reaction that 'Spohr was as well understood and as much goute as Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn, last season'.[99]

In Davison's case the main reason for his increasing coolness, though not coldness, towards Spohr is not difficult to pinpoint; he himself gave the answer in an article written in 1854 where, after describing the former exalted state of Spohr's reputation, he remarked:

> That engougement, that blind devotion, which could only see one colour in musical painting, one model to copy, one great master to venerate, has passed away. The old love vanished, and a new one supplied its place. A more

> general and intimate acquaintance with the instrumental masterpieces of Beethoven and Mozart, the oratorios of Handel, and some of the best operas of Rossini and Weber, had much to do with weakening the all-powerful influence of Spohr. But still more was to be attributed to the original and dazzling genius of Mendelssohn, who more rapidly than any other composer of any known epoch assumed a dominant and almost undivided sway over the tastes and feelings, the heads and hearts, of musicians. This was the real new love, which banished the old, and usurped its place. As Mendelssohn rose, Spohr fell. In the estimation of the world of music, the young composer utterly eclipsed the elder.[100]

There is no doubt that in this he reflected a substantial body of opinion, but he and others were nevertheless concerned that the bias was perhaps too much in Mendelssohn's favour. Ella, for example, observed in the same year:

> The complete monopoly of the musician's attention of late years by the ardent, passionate, captivating muse of Mendelssohn, has resulted in Spohr's works being less frequently heard than their merits deserve.[101]

And Davison, in the article already referred to, also qualified his analysis of the situation with the comment:

> That Mendelssohn was a greater inventor, and even a greater master than Spohr, we are ready to admit. But matters have now come to such a pass that the finest works of the latter - a noble and genuine musician for all that - are as often spoken of with ungrateful irreverence as with proper respect, and sometimes, too by those who should either know better, or cease to write and talk about music and its professors.[102*]

Davison, like the critic of The Morning Post in 1853, saw the errors of journalists as a serious threat to taste; for he was convinced that despite Spohr's weaknesses he was unquestionably the greatest living composer and the only true bearer of the torch of the classical tradition. On Spohr's departure the previous year he had concluded a valedictory article:

> It is said that Dr. Spohr considers this his last visit to England. Not so we hope. His occasional appearance among us is indispensable to put fresh blood into the veins of our musicians. The example of such a man is precious, and his personal presence gives it immediate weight and consequence.
>
> Mendelssohn can come no more. If Spohr will not, who shall be invited?[103]

The announcement that Spohr's 1853 visit to England was avowedly his last,

* A comparison with T.D. Eaton's remarks about Mendelssohn's popularity is interesting. [see Appendix A]

however, would doubtless have affected the supporters of the 'aesthetic school' in a different way; to them it probably served merely to emphasise that Spohr belonged to the past and was no longer relevant to modern developments. His symbolic departure from the musical scene seems to have opened the floodgates of criticism from this quarter as well as from the direction of those older critics who had never developed a taste for his style. An article which appeared in The Examiner on the occasion of the Philharmonic performance of Die Weihe der Töne in 1854 is a good example of this tendency. It commented scornfully:

> we hoped it would never again be roused from its repose on the undisturbed shelves of the Philharmonic library. The present directors, however, in their wisdom, or their weakness, now caused this abortive attempt at musical description to appear once more in broad lamplight, and a few have been found who discover in so intolerably long, laboured and ridiculous a composition, something to admire and nothing to condemn.[104]

It was this sort of abuse that caused Davison's censorious leading article in The Musical World on April 15, which began:

> There seems to be, at the present moment, a strong wish on the part of certain writers, who profess to instruct the public in musical affairs, to abuse and underrate the compositions of Dr. Spohr. This new prejudice, for it is nothing better, has been recently demonstrated to an outrageous extent. So much so, indeed, that we think it our duty to protest against it, and to warn our readers, lest they should be induced by plausible arguments and well-turned sentences, to render injustice to a musician whose influence on the progress of art in this country has been immensely beneficial. Whatever may be thought and said of Dr. Spohr, he can never be fairly classed among ordinary composers. His claims to rank among the greatest and most conscientious masters are unquestionable; and the benefits he has conferred on the art, in almost every branch of it, are too many and too solid to be overlooked or sneered at. It would be well for some of those "guides" of public opinion, who have recently adopted a tone of invariable depreciation when alluding to Dr. Spohr and his works, to ponder well on the ultimate tendency of what they are doing. They are teaching their readers to undervalue that which is of the utmost consequence to the welfare of music. They are throwing cold water on those qualities of sincerity and high attainment which are so eminently useful in its pursuit, by holding up to obloquy, if not to derision, the honest efforts of a simple and true man.

After a judicious assessment of Spohr's influence and importance, he concluded:

> We have alluded to this subject with regret; but it is the manifest duty of those who have the progress of music and the social consideration of its professors at heart, to do what lies in their power in order to arrest the march of error, and tear the veil from sophistry and falsehood. We cannot, indeed, remain idle and inattentive while the public is being notoriously misled in a matter of such serious importance. Dr. Spohr is an illustrious musician, a man of genius as well as of talent, and an honour to an art every branch of which he has adorned and enriched with his writings... To speak of such a man, as of one of the common sort of artists, or as a dry pedant, or as anything short of what he really deserves, is to derange the order of things and to strike a blow at the very foundation of music.
>
> Within the last fortnight two of the symphonies of Dr. Spohr - the Weihe der Töne and the D minor (No. 2), - have been exposed to flippant animadversions, from those on one side, who are nothing better than blind and bigoted past-worshippers, and on the other, from a very different class of critics, whose beau ideal is concentrated in a certain modern school of composition which might be properly styled the Music-run-mad School. That a work so full of imagination and beauty as the Weihe der Töne should be spoken of contemptuously by the same Aristarchus who recommends the curtailment of the first movement of Beethoven's pianoforte concerto in G major,* was not surprising - since the self sufficiency which urged him to give Beethoven a lesson in plan and development might very easily have incited him to put down Dr. Spohr as a laborious trifler. But so long as we have the power, we shall do our best to direct the public aright in these matters; nor shall we permit shallow objections to pass muster for sound criticism, and a mere pompous display of words for just appreciation. If, at a time when music is making such vast strides in the popular affection, and becoming so generally practised and understood, the compositions of Dr. Spohr are to be arraigned, by self-constitued judges, as severely as though they were the crude efforts of a tyro, or the blunders of one who writes without a knowledge of his art or facility in its practice, we can only say that it has progressed to very little purpose.[105]

In the long term Davison's efforts to stem the tide of denigration were in vain, though, with the exception of Chorley, there appear to have been few writers who ventured to employ such strongly condemnatory language as had the critic of The Examiner. But the verbal abuse probably continued, while snippets of information about the sneers of German supporters of the 'aesthetic school', directed not only towards Spohr but also towards almost all German composers from Haydn to Mendelssohn, occasionally seeped through into the English press. An instance of this is a series of articles attacking the 'aesthetic

* The Examiner had remarked on the Beethoven concerto that it 'would be perfect were the first movement somewhat shortened by the omission of reiterated passages'.

school' but at the same time publicising their prejudices, which appeared in translation from German in The Musical World in 1855.[106] Some of these prejudices were sarcastically referred to by Davison during the 1855 season when Wagner was visiting England as conductor of the Philharmonic Society. He informed the readers of The Times that:

> Herr Wagner is not only German to the backbone, but ultra-modern German - a preacher of the misty doctrine now maintained at Leipsic, which goes to upset all the received formalities of art, to prove Mozart "a child," Beethoven "erroneous," and Spohr "stupid," and the other great masters more or less in the wrong, or, at least, in all respects inferior to the new idol.[107]

Depreciations of Spohr from this quarter were also referred to by Davison in a review of one of Ella's Winter Musical Evenings in March 1855 at which Spohr's quartet op.58 no. 2 had been played. The review indicated, however, that despite the relative infrequency of performances of his music at this time his works were still capable, when well played, of raising the enthusiasm of an audience. He commented:

> Spohr's quartet (we hear too little of Spohr) was both charming and refreshing. It is becoming fashionable with a certain coterie (originated among the Jesuits of Leipsic, of course), to underrate this fine and genial master, with all his mannerisms, one of those to whom the art is most indebted... Every movement - the flowing moderato, the pleasantly varied and in itself pleasant theme, the sparkling rondo (Spanish to the last; yet Spohr, according to the Jesuits, has no character, but only an insipid manner peculiar to himself) - was admirably "interpreted" by Molique... The quartet was we repeat quite refreshing... By their loud applause, the audience of connoisseurs, select and fashionable as usual, showed their appreciation of the music.[108]

The necessity for Spohr's works to be especially well played in order to make an intelligible effect, and the general inadequacy of performances has been so frequently noted that it may seem superfluous to return to the point again. However, its relevance to public appreciation of Spohr's music in the 1850's, despite the considerable improvement in standards which had probably taken place by this time, should not be underestimated. Good performances were certainly given by musicians of the calibre of Molique and Hallé, and orchestras like the Philharmonic and Orchestral Union (much being dependent

on the efficiency of the conductors); but Spohr's works still presented insuperable problems to many of those who attempted them. Even such well known works as The Last Judgement could not yet expect to have justice done to them by any body of performers in the country. Thus, when given at the Worcester Festival of 1854 The Musical World had observed:

> Despite its obvious and great beauties, it is music hard to listen to by the uninitiated, and extremely difficult of execution...yet it is undeniably a fine work of one of the world's greatest musicians...the chromatic texture of Spohr's harmonies does not agree with the constitution of choral societies in general. The everlasting semitonic progression of his parts and restless wandering from key to key, puts them sadly out of their way - we make no exception even in favour of the redoubtable "800" of London and their autocratic general to boot.[109]

(The "800" and their general refers to The Sacred Harmonic and Costa.) For amateur orchestras which were tempted to play his music the obstacles which presented themselves were even greater, as is indicated by Chorley's observations on the repertoire of The Amateur Musical Society (see above p.202) and The Musical World's notice about The Brighton Amateur Symphony Society in 1855, where it was remarked: 'We recommend the society to play Haydn and Mozart oftener, and Beethoven and Spohr less frequently'.[110]

On balance it seems that the last few years before Spohr's death in 1859 was a period which saw a gentle decline in his reputation among musicians, but, as yet, few widespread attempts to deny him a place among the greatest composers. Even so inveterate a critic as Chorley conceded in 1854 that:

> all that he has produced for the violin as a solo instrument, permanently establishes him among the great German composers, and claims high and grateful honour.[111]

Davison, too, had remarked that:

> In one department he is unrivalled. Perhaps no composer has produced so much and so well for the first of orchestral as it is the first of solo instruments. Dr. Spohr's compositions for the violin alone (we say nothing of his other works) form one of the most extensive and valuable bequests that have been made to musicians.[112]

And this was an opinion in which the vast majority of critics and musicians would have concurred. There is evidence, too, that some of the chamber music,

though not played so often as Spohr's admirers might have liked, showed signs of achieving wider popularity during the last years of his life; The Musical World had remarked of a performance of the Piano Trio op.119 in 1854, for instance:

> Spohr's Trios seem to be getting into vogue - a fact which should be consoling to our pianists, seeing how few available compositions of this especial class they have at their disposal. The audience liked it too.[113]

But it was a different story with the operas, none of which seems to have been staged in England after 1853, and the orchestral works, most of which were infrequently given after that date. Even the overture to Jessonda was apparently so cooly received at the Philharmonic in 1856 that Davison was moved to exclaim:

> We never remember Spohr's magnificent composition... received with so little warmth. Is the Philharmonic audience growing unmusical or pedantic? - or is it about to passer en relique like the Parisian Conservatoire.[114]

The First Symphony, given by them in 1857, elicited the comment that it was 'the first of a noble series of orchestral masterpieces, scarcely estimated at their proper worth, even by those most entitled to adjudicate in matters of art',[115] while The Daily News observed of the same performance that it 'has not been heard for many years, and its repetition had something of the effect of novelty'[116] (though it had been given by the Amateur Musical Society in 1856). In fact, performances of Spohr's orchestral works were, on the whole, scarcely less frequent than they had ever been, but in proportion to a greatly increased number of orchestral concerts they occupied a far less prominent position than they had formerly done; and they excited far less interest, since they no longer represented the vanguard of artistic endeavour, notwithstanding Ella's remark in 1852 that Spohr's works were still considered 'by a large number of amateurs the ne plus ultra of modern art'.[117]

By the time of his death, however, the decline of appreciation had not proceeded far. The estimation of Spohr as a great master worthy to be ranked among the very greatest, but perhaps not quite equal to some of them, was

generally accepted. It was not until the 1890's that the judgement of history which placed him firmly in the second rank (from which the decline to virtual oblivion was rapid) was finally and unequivocally delivered.

Chapter 7

After 1859

The announcement of Spohr's death in October 1859 was not an occasion for searching assessments of his achievements and status; criticism was naturally muted by respectful appreciation. Nevertheless, press and public response to the news conveys a good deal about the current state of opinion.

Several signs of prevalent disagreements about his merits as a composer are apparent. Chorley, for instance, feeling unable in the circumstances to express his well-known distaste for Spohr's music, refrained from inserting an obituary notice in The Athenaeum; but he did remark rather ungraciously of a memorial concert given at the Monday Popular Concerts that:

> the entertainment was, for our tastes, cloying, - made up, so far as its instrumental portion was concerned, of Spohr's music. This even the skilful recommendations of the analytical programme cannot prevail upon us to enjoy in so large a quantity.[1]

On the whole, though, the response of the press was to produce notices that were virtually panegyrics, but even in the most appreciative of the obituaries there was an uneasy awareness that there were aspects of Spohr's style which must be regarded as weaknesses. The opening paragraph of The Musical World's long article on the composer illustrates the coexistence of reverence and reservations. It began:

> Spohr has died, full of years, crowned with glory, bending under the weight of laurels. The last of the Teutonic family of musical giants (in the opinion of many respectable judges the least "directly inspired"), this remarkable man excelled in every branch of composition.[2]

The Atlas made a similar observation to the parenthesized passage in the above

quotation when it remarked:

> Dr. Spohr belongs to the learned and accomplished order of his art, and certainly not to that of impulsive genius.[3]

Yet no serious doubts were expressed about the permanence of his achievements. Thus The Musical Times asserted that 'Louis Spohr's creations are a legacy bequeathed to thousands, and will be hailed with enthusiasm as long as music shall have charms to attract mankind'.[4] The Musical World was even more extravagant in its assertion of the immortality of Spohr's music, and concluded its obituary by confidently placing Spohr among the very greatest creative minds in history, saying:

> What is especially worthy of notice in comparing the relative merits of the great masters is that they resemble each other in nothing except in their common adherence to those irrefragable principles without which not only the musical art but all art must perish. A sort of conventional colour, a secular dialect, as it were, may suggest that Bach and Handel, Haydn and Mozart, were contemporaries; but apart from this and the principles in question, there is no appreciable tie to connect them together - no ordinary point of contact. Like all men of genius, they were strongly marked individualities, and like all strongly marked individualities, each spoke a language of his own, which could not under any circumstances whatsoever be confounded with that of another. Beethoven, by an almost exceptionable individuality, made the distinction even broader; and this would seem to have communicated itself in a measure to Beethoven's successors - Mendelssohn and Spohr - than whom the art has not produced two more original thinkers, two more independent workers. Among the three great Germans of the present century there was, indeed, nothing of idiomatic, or, as we have said, "conventional," in common. They wrote after fixed principles, and as musicians of the present and future must of necessity write, if they would emulate, equal, or surpass them. One fantastic theory after another will spring up, only to be discussed for a time and then abandoned, greatness in art being unattainable where nature, logic, and consistency are set at nought. What is unchangeable cannot die. Homer, Dante, Shakspere, and Molière, Raphael, Buanorotti, and Turner, owed their supremacy not more to their transcendent genius than to their instinctive veneration for rules not less immutable than irrefutable. Spohr - like his illustrious predecessors, Handel, Bach, Mozart, and Haydn, and his not less illustrious contemporaries, Beethoven and Mendelssohn - was of these; and as one of their great fraternity was able to produce works that are immortal.[5]

From this passage it is clear that Spohr's death had revived much of Davison's former enthusiasm for his music, and the extract quoted here makes it plain why this should have been so. The imagined threat to sanity in art posed by

the 'aesthetic school' and the 'music of the future' can be seen to be underlying Davison's sentiments. While he lived, Spohr had been the last embodiment of the classical tradition, representing the supremacy of order and tradition in musical composition; his death made these qualities all the more precious for those to whom the current trends in German music seemed like a wholesale rejection of all that was most important in their musical heritage and appeared to border on artistic insanity.*

The extent to which the English appreciation of Spohr was seen by some contemporaries as depending upon a rather narrow perception of the criteria of musical excellence is indicated in Fétis' obituary of him, where he maintained that in England and Germany Spohr's popularity could be largely attributed to 'une certain allure scolastique'. The French attitude towards Spohr was strikingly different from that in England and Germany; in France neither he nor Mendelssohn had ever been the object of the sort of adulation they had received in their own country and in England. Spohr was treated with respect by leading French musicians and his reputation acknowledged by them, but his music was seldom played. Fétis observed, after listing his works (rather inaccurately): 'telle est l'immense production du talent de Spohr! La France, Paris surtout, en ignore presque l'existence'. Later he commented that, compared to the music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, Spohr's music 'ne peut occuper que le second rang; or, il est dans la nature de l'esprit francais de ne point admettre de second ordre dans les choses qui aspirent aux honneurs classiques'.[6]

The period immediately following Spohr's death saw several accounts of his life published in German. One of the earliest of these was A.Maliban's highly

* Much the same feeling is expressed in a letter Brahms wrote to Bertha Porubszky in October 1859, where he exclaimed: 'Spohr is dead! He was probably the last of those who still belonged to an artistic period more satisfying than the one through which we now suffer. In those days one might well have looked about eagerly after each fair to see what new and beautiful things had arrived from one composer or another. Now things are different'.

inaccurate biography, Ludwig Spohr, seine Leben und Werken (1860), from which The Musical World published some translated extracts along with a few of Spohr's letters in 1860. It was closely followed by Spohr's Selbstbiographie (1860-61), H. Giehne's Zur Erinnerung an Ludwig Spohr (1860) and L. Stierlin's Louis Spohr (1862-63). No complete biography was written in English, but in 1865 the Selbstbiographie was published in a poor translation as Louis Spohr's Auto-biography. Spohr had compiled the autobiography in later life from old diaries, letters and press cuttings, and from his own, often hazy, recollections. The narrative was only completed up to 1838 by Spohr himself, after which date it was continued by his widow with the copious assistance of quotations from letters and reviews. The translator's preface to the English edition assumed the continuing existence of a substantial number of admirers of his music, saying:

> In publishing an English translation of the unadorned yet highly interesting Autobiography of the celebrated Violinist and great Composer Louis Spohr, we consider we are but satisfying a natural desire on the part of his many admirers in this country to become acquainted with both the public and private life of this great musical genius.

The salient features of his character to which this preface drew attention were such as might be expected to have recommended him to a Victorian reader, for it observed:

> Modest and unassuming at the commencement of his career, Spohr continued so till the end, notwithstanding the celebrity he achieved and the high position to which he attained. The praises showered upon him neither turned his brain nor puffed him up with pride; and he has left us an example of high morality, great amiability, and bright domestic virtues, too rare alas! among artists and men of genius.[7]

In this he was like Mendelssohn, and it was undoubtedly a factor in their popularity, both directly and through its sublimation in their music which is always ordered and controlled, never suggesting the excesses of ungovernable passion.

The ordered decency of Spohr's music was one of the features which most strongly recommended it to many of the more conservative musicians in England and Germany, who, in the 1860's, were living under what they saw as the threat of imminent musical anarchy. Something of this can be seen in Schlüter's

History of Music (1865), where, in discussing Die Weihe der Töne, he observed:

> Spohr's work contrasts favourably with the pretentious but shallow symphonies of recent days, from which it differs in this respect - that instead of individualizing and describing a Francesca, a Tasso, or a Faust (Liszt), its contents itself with a general delineation of human life and emotion; and, after all, tells us even more than we find in the book.[8]

Schlüter's comments on the works of Liszt and Wagner were particularly severe, and he noted with regret that 'Of recent days, many admirable works of Spohr have in Germany been treated with undeserved neglect'.[9] The tendency among many younger musicians to denigrate Spohr's music was increasingly apparent in the 1860's, particularly in Germany. After a performance of one of Spohr's double quartets at the Leipsig Gewandhaus in 1864, for instance, Hauptmann wrote to Hauser saying that he had heard a 'pack of unfledged critics' disparaging it, 'concluding that all such music is out of date'; and he commented indignantly: 'If we could but give them an idea how far above their criticism a work of Art like this really is'.[10]

Caught between these sorts of criticism and the older established objections of critics like Chorley, however, performances of Spohr's music continued to decline in number during the 1860's. This was regretted by Schlüter, among others, and though recognising his weaknesses he protested against the extent to which Spohr's achievement was being undervalued, saying:

> Spohr's later works, especially his operas and quartets, are mere repetitions of his earlier ones; and that which formerly made him appear original degenerated into mannerism and affectation.

So far he might seem entirely to be in agreement with Chorley, but he went on to say:

> These faults are only too evident...and have so warped the judgement of musicians on the subject of Spohr's music that not only have vigour and distinctness of expression been denied him, but also depth, imagination, and sentiment... Nevertheless, though even the most favourable opinion may find much that is onesided or deficient in Spohr's compositions, he is greatly to be respected as a sterling German musician - one who made no attempts to appear that which he was not; but, so far as he went, was genuine and entire.[11]

In England during the 1860's there is evidence that a considerable number

of people found it difficult to understand the relative neglect into which much of his music had fallen, and that probably a majority of informed musicians continued to regard him as one of the greatest composers. The admiration which Spohr had generated among his contemporaries can be traced in many of the books of musical memoirs which appeared during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Henry Phillips, a successful singer of the 1830's and 1840's indicated his attitude towards Spohr in his Musical and Personal Recollections published in 1864. At one point he remarked:.

> During the active career of Mr Edward Taylor, Spohr's oratorios were much more frequently heard than now. Why this should be, when our taste for, and appreciation of, classical music is said to be greater and more refined than at any former period, I cannot tell, unless it is that it is fancied they are not attractive. If this is really the case some society should take the matter up, and have these works read - for I have no hesitation in declaring that the "Last Judgement," is, from the beginning to its termination, the finest, most solemn, and most sacred oratorio ever composed. It is a sublime inspiration.[12]

But the strong divergence of opinions on his merits, which had always existed, continued to be evident. This is neatly illustrated by the contents of two notes which John Ella received prior to a Musical Union concert in 1865 at which Spohr's Piano Trio op.119 was to be played. They read:

> No. 1. 'I really cannot stand these chromatics of friend Spohr; so pray allow me to transfer my ticket for the next Union.'
> No. 2. 'I anticipate a very great treat next Tuesday as I see Hallé is to play my favourite trio of Spohr.'[13]

In 1867, however, it would still have been possible to see the neglect of Spohr's music as a temporary phenomenon, and signs of a revival of interest might have been detected. In Music and its Art-Mysteries, Henry Wylde, after discussing the attitude of mind necessary to appreciate the opening of Haydn's Creation, observed:

> A similar condition of mind is absolutely necessary to appreciate in its entirety a work which I am happy to say is becoming generally popular; I mean Spohr's symphony, so called, "The Power of Sound."[14]

This tallies with Francesco Berger's recollection that at one time it had enjoyed a popularity equal to any of Beethoven's symphonies, and places that

time around the 1870's and probably also the 1880's.

At the end of the decade it would seem still to have been conventional to include Spohr with the great composers; thus W. Adye in Musical Notes, in the section on 'The Great Composers', after discussing Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, commented:

> The present age has witnessed a host of composers in all styles and of varied excellence; but our object has been to select the giants of art. Two have still to be mentioned in this catagory who have lately passed away from among us, Spohr and Mendelssohn.[15]

But his judgement of Spohr was qualified by some of the less than enthusiastic opinions which were becoming widely accepted. He noted that 'Spohr's style was not spontaneous, but heavy and studied'. On the whole, however, Adye's account shows him to have been an admirer of Spohr's music, for he remarked that Spohr 'exhibited a great refinement, coupled with majestic feeling which never fails to attract the true connoisseur'.[16]

With the broader musical public, on the other hand, it is clear that his music elicited less genuine admiration, with the possible exception of one or two works such as Die Weihe der Töne and The Last Judgement. A good indication of this is to be found in H.R. Haweis' extraordinarily popular book Music and Morals (first edition 1871), where, instructing his reader (humourously) how to conduct himself in a musical conversation, he wrote:

> You must speak of Beethoven as "sublime, but occasionally obscure;" of Spohr, as "scientific, but too sickly and chromatic;" of Mendelssohn, as "fascinating;" of Schumann, as "a man of some genius;" and you may say of Gounod, that "he is charming, but that you doubt whether he will last;" and it will always be safe, except in the presence of really good musicians, to sniff at Wagner and the music of the future.[17]

J.B. Cox, though himself an admirer of Spohr, also gave evidence of the prevailing tendency to denigrate Spohr's music in his anonymously published Musical Recollections of the Last Half Century (1872), commenting:

> Spohr, after many years of active occupation as a violin teacher and player, turned his attention almost exclusively to composition, and in this higher walk of his profession produced works of a class so excellent in oratorio, operatic, and symphonic details, that they entitle him to be placed

> among the most illustrious "masters", both of his own and other countries. It has been the fashion to decry Spohr in England, and to treat his works with something akin to contempt, because of Mendelssohn having caught the English taste in a higher degree, and in great measure overborne many others of his contemporaries.[18]

Returning to the subject later Cox confirmed his own attachment to The Last Judgement, and in doing so indicated that it was still found to be attractive though not often reproduced, saying: 'That work is still occasionally heard, and always with the liveliest satisfaction'.[19]

In his History of Modern Music (1875) J.P. Hullah attempted to reconcile the received classification of Spohr as one of the great composers and the current lack of interest in his music, yet he could not quite make up his mind to deny Spohr his place among the musical Olympians. His judgement was that:

> Spohr...was undoubtedly a man of genius and a great musician; but if, as is not impossible, posterity should come to the conclusion that his works are, on the whole, the least great which have come from the pens of the greatest composers of the Fourth Period, the result will inevitably be attributable to his having adopted a genus in music, the "chromatic," which, however valuable as a decoration and a resource, can never serve for the substance of that which is to stand the wear and tear of everday use.[20]

This sort of reluctance to say unequivocally that Spohr should not be regarded as being in the same class as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, continued in England until the 1890's, and even then it seems as if many musical historians were almost apologetic about relegating him to a subordinate position.

The situation in the 1870's was paradoxical. On the one hand Spohr would conventionally have been included in a list of the ten greatest composers in history (see, for example, his inclusion in F. Crowest's The Great Tone-Poets (1874)); on the other, the criticisms which were levelled at his music were far more comprehensive than would have been aimed at any of the other composers in the list. Also, most of his works seem to have been much less frequently performed than those of many composers who were generally considered inferior to him, yet when performances did take place they seem invariably to have been well received. A good example of this last point is afforded by a review of a

concert in 1879 at which the Piano Trio p.119 was given. The Monthly Musical Record remarked:

> At the concert of February 17th a comparative novelty was provided in Spohr's trio in E minor which was played for the first time by Mlle. Krebs, Messrs Joachim and Piatti. In the hands of such competent experts all the many beauties of the composition - and they are numerous and striking withal - were laid, as it were, with loving and kindly hand before the assembly, and they, nothing unwilling, recognised and duly enjoyed them.[21]

Equivocal reactions to Spohr's music continued into the 1880's, as many of the musical histories of that period indicate. F.L. Ritter in his History of Music (1880), for instance, observed that 'he created much that is fine and that may be counted among the best efforts of his time', but went on to qualify his judgement by pointing out the 'lack of energy and spontaneity' which cause his music to become 'monotonous and somewhat wearisome in effect'.[22] A similar balance of opinion was shown in J.D. Brown's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians (1886), Paul David's article on Spohr in Grove's Dictionary (1883) (which has survived, curiously enough, into the fifth edition (1953) with only minor deletions), and Emil Naumann's History of Music (1884-5). But whatever criticisms may have been registered in these books, none of the writers envisaged the almost total oblivion into which Spohr's works were to sink within little more than a decade. Indeed, there are suggestions in many of these assessments that the neglect which his music had suffered during the previous twenty years had been a temporary aberration which was then showing signs of being righted. In the 1870's there is evidence that Spohr's music was achieving a belated popularity in France (see A. Vidal Les Instruments à archet 1876-8), and by the 1880's an efflorescence of interest was apparent in Germany and England. Naumann, in his comprehensive and popular History of Music remarked towards the end of his thorough and judicious consideration of Spohr's qualities and his position in the development of Romanticism:

> Spohr's noble sentimentality and warmth of expression excited during his lifetime all the youth of Germany into an unusual enthusiasm. The composer's influence is now somewhat less than it was, and indeed latterly his productions have been underrated, but as all that is

> genuine resists momentary bias, Spohr's works are once again coming to the fore.[23]

In England a similar trend is confirmed by Brown's Biographical Dictionary where it was noted that 'his works are now enjoying a large amount of popularity',[24] and in William Glover's Memoirs of a Cambridge Chorister (1889) where he commented that Spohr was then 'much admired and increasingly respected'.[25]

One reason for this Indian summer of popularity was undoubtedly the interest aroused by the centenary of Spohr's birth in 1884. In England, centenary celebrations brought his music once more into the public ear and provoked some vigorous and partisan discussion in the press. Writings from this period indicate that there was a considerable number of musicians who retained a great measure of respect and admiration for Spohr. A writer in The Musical Standard in 1884, for example, lamented:

> It is the fashion now-a-days to slight Spohr or at least his oratorios. "Die Letzten Dinge", mistranslated "The Last Judgement" maintains its ground, although too rarely reproduced.[26]

And another writer in the same periodical showed his attachment to Spohr when discussing the contents of an analytical note for a Crystal Palace Concert at which the centenary was being commemorated. His comments illustrate the difficulties that were being experienced in deciding Spohr's place in the musical world, and also that his position could still be reckoned to be among the greatest composers. He wrote:

> The programme annotator strives hard to find an exact place for Spohr in the ranks of musicians. He writes: "Only Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn can be said to have surpassed him," and a footnote, signed "S.A.C." says, "Some may add Schubert; a more restricted number Schumann." My footnote would, on the contrary, have run thus: 'Perhaps some may prefer Spohr to a few of those who are said to have surpassed him." But in reality Spohr has the rivalry of very few modern writers. He is pre-eminently an optimist - the last if not the greatest of those possessing this spirit. Optimism - unaffected and childlike - shines through every line of his writings: how, then, can he have anything in common with Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann?[27]

Other evidence of appreciation can be found in memoirs and recollections. Sir G.A. Macfarren, in his Musical History (1885) observed that Spohr's

'deliciously-phrased, rich-toned symphonies have lost regard in late years, but not beauty'.[28] W. Kuhe, whose Musical Recollections were published in 1896 wrote:

> I had an enormous admiration alike for his playing and his works ever since I can remember. In particular his opera Jessonda and his symphony The Power of Sound exercised over me an extraordinary fascination.[29]

The same sort of fascination was felt by Sir Charles Hallé, as his Life and Letters (1869) indicates;[30] while his wife, the virtuoso violinist Madam Norman-Neruda, frequently performed Spohr's concertos, quartets and duos. The violin music certainly survived longer than his other works, with the possible exception of The Last Judgement, probably owing to the advocacy of such players as Madam Norman-Neruda and Joachim. This is confirmed by Glover in his Memoirs of a Cambridge Chorister, where he observed:

> Now that Spohr's solo violin music is so greatly appreciated, I hope we shall hear more of his fascinating quartets. They require most careful handling, close attention to the purest liquid tone; but I am sure that those who have taken part in them on these conditions will say at once that few compositions of their kind can afford a similar amount of elegant pleasure and mental satisfaction. Real Spohrites are never tired of their favourite master. True it is that he often repeats certain forms and phrases, but what if these forms be charming and attractive?[31]

The information that there were still real Spohrites to be found at this late date is interesting; but they were undoubtedly a dwindling band. One of the latest expressions of regret for the neglect of his music in the concert hall occurs in W. Macfarren's Memories (1905), where, discussing the musical events of 1868, he remarked:

> Among noble works given this season and now too rarely heard, were Spohr's beautiful symphony in D Minor (and)... the same master's brilliant Overture Jessonda.[32]

All these admirers were old men, or dead, by the turn of the century and younger musicians, who had never witnessed the enthusiasm with which Spohr had been greeted on his last visit to England, or lived through the period when his works were a common feature in London concerts, do not seem to have shared their elders' nostalgic admiration for his music.

As late as 1887 it was still possible for critics to believe that the tide

might be about to turn, as comments in The Musical Times on a performance of Calvary (the first in London since 1852) demonstrate. The critic observed:

> Those who listened to Spohr's "Calvary,"...must have been convinced that music of such exceptional merit could not have remained unheard since 1852, save from some cause quite apart from its value in the world of art...we have every hope that "Calvary" may henceforth occupy the position to which it is justly entitled.[33]

However, such optimism was unfounded; the 1890's were a decisive point in the decline of Spohr's music into obscurity. George Bernard Shaw's description of one of Spohr's trios as 'Mozart-and-water, as usual', and his reference to the 'tranquil boredom' of the Fourth Symphony is typical of the scorn which it was fashionable to display among younger musicians.[34] Even those with whom his music still found a certain degree of favour showed an increasing unwillingness to place him in the first rank. The convention of including Spohr among the greatest composers, which had persisted up to that time, was almost entirely discontinued in the 1890's; yet it was with reluctance that some writers denied his right to be included. The author of a series of articles entitled 'Portrait Sketches from the Life' which appeared in The Monthly Musical Record for 1891, said of Spohr:

> His position as a composer generally is not so easily determined; to relegate him to the second rank is repellant to one's feelings of veneration for him, and yet we cannot place him by the side of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Not that his aims were less elevated or his workmanship less perfect but because his emotional range was more limited.[35]

A similar point of view was expressed by W.J. Henderson in Famous Composers and their Works (1895) where Spohr nevertheless merited an eleven-page article with illustrations. He wrote:

> It is difficult for us at this day to fairly estimate the importance of Spohr as a figure in musical history... But though we with over half a century's perspective find the masterworks of Weber and Mendelssohn still in the foreground, while Spohr recedes into the middle distance, the contemporaries of these composers saw them standing apparently shoulder to shoulder at the front of the picture. Spohr's influence upon those who lived when he did was very considerable, and, more than that, there are certain features of his style, which, it cannot be doubted, presented themselves as attractive models to his immediate followers along the path of musical progress.[36]

The opinion expressed in the last sentence of this passage is noteworthy since, though Spohr's influence and historical importance was undoubtedly significant, as contemporary evidence proves, and was commonly recognised up to the 1890's, it was consistently ignored or denied by almost all the historians of a later generation. One of the last writers of any importance to assert the significance of Spohr's influence was H.C. Banister in a lecture on 'The Music of the Victorian Era' included in his Interludes (1898). Here he observed:

> The influence of Spohr upon musical development at the early part of our epoch was very marked. He represented a splendid school of violin playing; and by the charm of his writing for his own instrument exercised a fascinating spell upon violinists. His concertos and quartets were great favourites with them. Moreover the mannerism of his compositions of all kinds...was alluring, and not difficult to imitate; and most of the then rising generation of composers came under the spell, caught the trick, yielded to the most individualistic influence of the time and were very Spohr-ish in their writing.[27]

Banister was in a position to speak with personal authority, for his father H.J. Banister had been a well known cellist, publisher, author and arranger, who as early as the 1820's had issued some of Spohr's orchestral music arranged as septets. That the son, too, admired Spohr's music is made obvious by, for instance, his description of the D minor symphony (no. 2) as 'a work which it is well-nigh impossible to hear without being stirred to enthusiasm'.[38]

The new generation of musicians coming to maturity towards the end of the century, however, were by no means so well disposed towards Spohr as those whose youthful opinions had been coloured by the then prevailing enthusiasm for him. They were in many cases prophets of an English musical renaissance to whom the dark ages of foreign domination by composers such as Spohr and Mendelssohn was a time best forgotten. It was natural for them to attempt to minimise that domination and to deprecate the achievements of the composers whom they regarded as responsible for stultifying and misleading native musical talent. Mendelssohn's reputation barely survived the onslaught: Spohr's sank almost without trace.

It may be appropriate at this stage to consider the combination of

circumstances which had conduced to the extraordinary decline of Spohr's reputation during the fifty years after his death. In England the above-mentioned element of nationalism clearly played some part, but it was by no means the whole story, for in Germany too his obscurity became almost as complete. As has already been suggested, many of those who most strongly advocated his music during the latter part of his lifetime and in the period immediately following his death did so because he seemed to be the last representative of a school which had no worthy successor; however, the gradual acceptance of, and growing enthusiasm for the music of Wagner, Schumann, Brahms, Gounod, Dvořák, Tchaikovsky and others, and the rediscovery of the music of such major composers as Bach and Schubert destroyed that position. Francesco Berger saw the introduction of Russian music in particular, as an important factor in the decline of Spohr's popularity, indicating that its decline had begun 'when the tide of Russian influence began to inundate this country, submerging much that was good and some that was better than what it brought us'.[39]

This explanation is all very well as far as it goes, but since the flood of new music did not submerge the works of other composers who had been held in comparable standing with Spohr, it must be assumed that there were factors in Spohr's music which rendered it especially susceptible to being overwhelmed. The non-popular character of his music had often been remarked upon, even by himself; it had been described as 'scientific' right from its earliest introduction into England and with the exception of a few works never seems to have succeeded in obtaining as wide a popular following as that of Beethoven or Mendelssohn. A great admirer of Spohr's music, T.D, Eaton, had observed in an article included in his Musical Criticisms and Biography (1872):

> We have always considered Spohr the finest and most original writer than has appeared since Beethoven. Less wild and eccentric than Weber more solid and inventive than Mendelssohn, he is great in all styles of music. Yet it is much to be doubted whether he will ever become popular in this country owing to his inveterate predilection for artificial harmony. His melodies are often intensely sweet, as well as clear and simple, taken

by themselves; but the harmony gives them a different character. Where the musician is delighted with an artful beauty, the common hearer is disappointed with an effect which he can neither feel nor understand. The new relationships that are constantly starting up are too subtle and refined for him to trace. All men who are musically constituted by nature derive more or less pleasure from natural harmony; but artificial harmony is chiefly for those who have studied, or at least become familiar, with the resources of art. Since music is intended for all mankind, we cannot help thinking Spohr's excess of refinement a defect in his music.[40]

(A detailed discussion of Spohr's style is to be found in Ch. 8 below.)

Undoubtedly, as the foregoing chapters have indicated, Spohr's music had roused the enthusiasm of musicians and connoisseurs, but failed to win the allegiance of the general public. After mid-century a fresh generation of musicans and connoisseurs had found new idols, and while their elders retained a considerable degree of warmth towards Spohr, most of the younger generation thought his music old-fashioned and somewhat mechanical, though conceding him a fair measure of nobility and sincerity. A good example of the divergence between those who had been fired with youthful enthusiasm and those who had not is to be found in E. Speyer's My Life and Friends (1937) where he related a conversation which took place between Brahms and Speyer's father-in-law, Kufferath, in the 1880's. He recalled:

> we attended a performance of Spohr's Jessonda which my father-in-law heard for the first time; greatly excited Brahms strode up to my father-in-law, exclaiming, "What, Kufferath, you heard Jessonda for the first time! Well what impression did it make upon you."... /He replied/ "Well I enjoyed the many fine and noble things in it, but I feel that parts of it today strike one as old fashioned and conventional." "No Kufferath," cried Brahms, "there I am not with you. I find the opera magnificent. But of course, I saw and learned to love it in my early days, and it affects me in the same way as my other youthful enthusiasm do. Jessonda captured my heart and I shall feel the same about it for the rest of my life.[41]

There were still many musicians like Brahms, Joachim, Hallé, Kuhe, Banister etc., over whom the attractions of Spohr's music had cast a lifelong spell, alive during the 1890's, and a few of them lingered on into the next century. This meant that it was not possible for writers who were active between the 1890's and the end of the Great War totally to ignore Spohr's place

in the development of nineteenth-century music. Stanford, for example, is quoted in Scholes' Oxford Companion to Music as saying that he could remember a time when Spohr was more highly thought of than Beethoven;[42] this was clearly an exaggeration, for except by a very few this was never the case, but it does indicate the strength of the admiration which persisted during the latter part of the century. Also writers of Stanford's generation would certainly have been familiar with some of Spohr's music in the concert hall. They could not therefore pass over Spohr in silence, but it will be clear from a few examples that the sense of personal involvement which animated many of the earlier assessments, either for or against Spohr, is absent from later accounts. From the historiographical standpoint the important thing is not so much what was said about him by younger writers as what was left out.

Some of the earliest of these references continued to reflect the uncertainty as to whether Spohr's music would survive as a living tradition, for instance, H.W. Hadow's comments in Studies in Modern Music (1898)[43]. But it soon became apparent that with few exceptions his music was dead to the public; and there are even hints that some musical historians were ready to discuss it without any adequate direct knowledge of it. A glaring example is to be found in F. Niecks' Programme Music in the Last Four Centuries (1906), where after considering Die Weihe der Töne in some detail showing his personal acquaintance with the score, he went on to discuss all the rest of Spohr's programme music in a few sentences, giving the impression that he had probably never looked at the scores. He said of the Seventh Symphony, Irdisches und Göttlisches im Menschenleben, that the small orchestra consisted of eleven 'solo string instruments'[44] whereas, in fact, the eleven solo instruments are a mixture of wind and strings.

Along with the frequent implication that writers were unfamiliar with the bulk of Spohr's music went a tendency to play down the extent of his popularity and influence. Fuller-Maitland, in his English Music (1902) wrote:

> There was never actually a date at which the budding

> composer of oratorio felt that his only chance of success lay in imitating Spohr, as had been the case in regard to Handel and Mendelssohn alike.[45]

It is debatable whether the statement is accurate, in those terms, of Handel and Mendelssohn, but it is certainly misleading to imply that there was no period at which Spohr's style exerted a powerful influence on English composers. Indeed, from Fuller-Maitland's use of the expression 'had been the case' it seems possible that Spohr's longevity had mislead him into failing to recognise that Spohr's influence had preceded that of Mendelssohn.

Parry, in Summary of the History...of...Music (1905), was more judicious in his assessment, but in stating that Spohr was 'historically most important in matters connected with the violin and the orchestra'[46] (i.e. orchestration; for which opinion he was probably indebted to S.S. Wesley in a conversation recorded in Parry's diary; see below p.270), he excluded Spohr's very real influence in other areas. Colles, too, who made only a brief reference to Spohr in The Growth of Music (1916),maintained that 'His violin music was his point of real distinction'.[47] Stanford's comments in A History of Music (1916) are typical of the sort of opinions held by those who deplored the foreign domination of British music during the mid-nineteenth century. He remarked disparagingly:

> Unfortunately his work was so soaked with sugary sentiment and so devoid of real backbone, that while it possessed qualities which attracted for the moment, it failed to retain its hold on the musical public. A dinner consisting entirely of sweets was a novelty, but soon palled upon the public palate.[48]

This severe judgement is not only unfair to Spohr's music, but is also historically misleading; for even though Stanford added that 'Spohr during his lifetime had an astonishing quota of success', it is hardly possible to deduce from his statement that in England the success lasted over a period of at least forty years and that a majority of the most distinguished musicians of the period had been among Spohr's most enthusiastic and faithful admirers.

It is ironic that just at the time when even the tail end of the performing tradition of Spohr's music was beyond the personal memory of most active musical

historians, the veteran pianist Francesco Berger, then in his late eighties, should have recalled Spohr's former popularity in an article in The Monthly Musical Record of 1921 entitled 'Beethoven, Spohr and Hummel'. He argued that much of Spohr's music was worth reviving, concluding:

> The moral of my tale is: our just and proper appreciation of Beethoven should not blind us to the merits of his contemporaries Spohr and Hummel... There were temples, of old, to other gods besides Jupiter. Let us have more than one temple today.[49]

It does not seem that his plea met with much response, though it possibly prompted a vague and ill-informed article in The Musical Times the following year entitled 'Spohr and his Influence' by C. àB. Williams. His suggestion that Spohr's influence was probably more far-reaching than was generally conceded failed either to convince or to attract the attention of scholars in England who might have rehabilitated his reputation to some extent. The musical establishement, both academic and practical, remained firmly of the opinion that Spohr's music was of little interest. The new generation of writers coming to maturity after the Great War accepted without question the accounts given by their immediate predecessors; there is no evidence that any English musical historian went to primary sources at this period.

The general misconception that then prevailed about the sort of impact Spohr had really made on his contemporaries is illustrated by a remark in Ernest Newman's A Musical Critic's Holiday (1925), where he suggested that though popular with the public Spohr was not highly regarded by contemporary musicians of quality.[50] This is the reverse of the truth; it was precisely among musicians that Spohr had his most devoted admirers, as has been conclusively demonstrated in this study.

Musical history books in English of the 1920's contain no more than passing references to Spohr. A.E. Hull, in Music: Classical, Romantic and Modern (1927), mentioned him briefly in connection with his influence on English church music, but faith in his direct knowledge of Spohr's music is shaken by his comment that the Seventh Symphony has a small orchestra of 'eleven string instruments';[51]

information which he clearly derived from Niecks, not from the score.* Cecil Gray's History of Music (1928), does not credit Spohr with any significance whatsoever.

The next decade did not produce any marked revival of interest or any serious attempt to re-examine source material. It seemed clear to English musicians that, as Gerald Abraham wrote in A Hundred Years of Music (1938), 'Spohr's music is dead'. He also reflected the accepted view at the time when in referring to his programme symphonies he asserted:

> But Spohr's music is of no great value for its own sake and he exercised little or no influence on the historical development of the symphony.[52]

In Music and Western Civilisation (1942), P.H. Lang referred quite frequently to Spohr, but it is disappointing to note that his remarks give no suggestion that he had made much effort to go beyond the commonly accepted view as expressed by Abraham. Like so many of his predecessors he appears to have had little knowledge of the music, saying, for instance, of the Seventh Symphony, for double orchestra, that it 'merely makes enough noise to put Berlioz to shame',[53] - a comment which is about as far from the truth as it is possible to get, and a slight on Berlioz into the bargain.

One writer, A. Hargreave Ashworth, showed greater curiosity in an article in Musical Opinion (1940), when he noted some of the evidence for the esteem once enjoyed by Spohr's music and alluded to 'the trail it has left over British music prior to the national revival'. He also postulated that it was 'an influence probably more baneful and ubiquitous than that of Mendelssohn, whose professional dexterity was quite beyond the average mimic's ability'.[54] No scholars came forward to test the validity of his hypothesis.

In the 1950's a change of attitude began to be apparent in England. James A. Armstrong asked, in an article in The Strad (1951), entitled 'The Decline of

* And this curious error is repeated in A. Veinus , The Concerto (1948), p. 161.

Spohr', whether 'there is any likelihood of a revival of interest in Spohr', and showed a knowledge of a range of his works, including the Second Symphony in D Minor which he described as a 'very fine work which would deserve to be revived'.[55] More interest was indeed shown during the period immediately prior to the centenary of Spohr's death in 1959. Some of the chamber music began to be played again and even recorded. A record of the Nonet op31 prompted P.H. Lang to write an editorial in The Musical Quarterly in which he described it as 'a near masterpiece' and went on to consider the sketchy state of knowledge about 'the generation of musicians reaching maturity at about the time of Beethoven's death'. He observed that 'the Beethovenian era is still largely unknown territory to most students of music', and concluded that 'if we persist in consigning the dim figures behind Beethoven to complete oblivion we shall never understand why Brahms developed as he did, while Berlioz, Chopin, and Liszt went their own way'.[56]

The centenary in 1959 prompted performances and broadcasts by the B.B.C., but as Gerald Seaman pointed out in The Listener,[57] none of the larger works had been revived. His assessment of Spohr was cautiously appreciative; others were downright hostile, as for example a review in Musical Opinion of the centenary concert.[58] 1959 also saw the publication of Lady Dorothy Mayer's The Forgotten Master, the only biography of Spohr in English. It was, however, little more than a simple narrative of his life and failed to provide the thorough reappraisal which was required.

Despite some specialist work which has been carried out in the past twenty years or so, there has still not been any serious attempt by musical historians to reintegrate Spohr into the history of his age, and misconceptions about the nature of his popularity and influence are still the rule rather than the exception. Many books on the period which are in current use scarcely give Spohr a mention. Mellers' Romanticism and the Twentieth Century (1962) is an example, while Eric Werner, in Mendelssohn, A New Image of the Composer and his Age (1963), was astonishingly able to write a chapter on 'The Musical Axes of

of Europe' without once mentioning Spohr. Worse than the sins of omission are the sins of commission. Perhaps the prime example is Longyear's Nineteenth-Century Romanticism in Music (1969), one of the few recent books in English to devote more than a paragraph or two to him. Longyear made no attempt even to state the enigma of Spohr's popularity during his lifetime followed by posthumous neglect, let alone explain it. He contented himself simply with giving a superficial description of Spohr's output and a few unsubstantiated remarks about the influence of his programme music on the development of the symphonic poem and of his harmony on Wagner's. Some of the statements he made about Spohr's works seem to be based upon a scant acquaintance with the bulk of his output. In particular his judgement that The Fall of Babylon is the best of Spohr's oratorios, is a curious one; it is rendered all the more suspect by his inclusion of a musical quotation which is attributed to The Fall of Babylon, but which is actually from The Last Judgement.[59]

Clearly, Spohr's importance in the development of nineteenth-century music has only been partially recognised. Misconceptions resulting from an inadequate knowledge of his music and from the lack of an overall view of his popularity and influence are still being perpetrated. When Spohr's dominant position, and especially his impact on young composers, in England and Germany at a crucial stage in the evolution of Romanticism is properly understood, it will substantially modify the presently accepted picture of the period. This study unquestionably reveals Spohr's impact in England to have been of far greater extent and duration than could possibly have been inferred from the scant attention he has received from musical historians in the past 80 years; it may also suggest that his music is of much greater instrinsic value than modern analysis is inclined to admit.

Chapter 8

Characteristics of Spohr's Style

It is hardly open to question, if the evidence is fairly assessed, that many features of Spohr's style were admired and not infrequently imitated by some of the most important composers of the period; but it has to be admitted that Spohr's own artistic creativity, despite its seminal influence on so many of his contemporaries, occupied a relatively restricted field. His music has not the universality of Beethoven's and it could be argued that it does not even achieve the more limited range of Mendelssohn's or Schumann's, both of whose works owed a debt to Spohr. This impression is reinforced when the whole of his substantial output is taken into consideration; for acquaintance with his works in bulk leaves no doubt that his inspiration was unequal to the burden which he imposed upon it, though it would be unjust to deny the excellence of his best music. Spohr was, in a word, a mannerist* and moreover, as Edward Holmes observed: 'there never lived a mannerist in music whose peculiarities were more readily recognised'.[1] This characterisation of Spohr was common both during his lifetime and after his death, the same terms being constantly used to describe him by admirers and depreciators alike. Thus, in 1838, The Analyst could not avoid succumbing to the attraction

* The nineteenth century use of the term is not to be confused with its modern, more specific, employment for music of the early seventeenth century.

of Spohr's Third Symphony despite what was referred to as its 'mannerism and self-repetitions';[2] but in 1850 Chorley took a different view of the same work, describing it as 'a curiosity in its meagreness of idea, mannerism of treatment and immoderate display of modulation'.[3] In 1869 Adye noted: 'Mendelssohn has been charged with mannerism, and with repeating himself; and so especially has Spohr. But what great man has not?'[4] And in 1886 Brown's Biographical Dictionary commented on 'his mannered and self-repeating style'.[5]

But before considering the constituent elements of Spohr's style and the features of it which gave rise to comments of this sort, it is important to examine briefly some of the attitudes implicit in the use of the expression 'mannerism' at that time. It is clear that there was no sense in which 'mannerist' was used as a term of praise; but neither was it consistently used to imply strong disapproval, though there was often a shade of reproach in its application. Mannerism, however, could almost be said to be the distinguishing characteristic of the age. Emil Naumann saw it as the most important factor separating the composers of what he called 'the epoch of the great German talents' (in which he included all composers from Spohr, Weber and Schubert onwards) from the composers of the 'genius period', which immediately preceded it, whose salient feature was style rather than manner. He was at pains to point out that 'it would be an absolute misinterpretation...if in characterising a master as a mannerist the term were coupled with the notion of reproach', and that 'a mannerist in music, as in the sister arts, may be an artist of much importance',[6] and an English critic, T.D. Eaton, wrote: 'That Spohr is somewhat of a mannerist no one would be likely to deny, since this would be tantamount to denying him to be an original writer'.[7] Consequently, to find the term applied to Spohr does not of itself afford sufficient grounds for inferring that he could not at the same time be regarded as a composer of major stature and influence; indeed, Naumann observed that

> the manner of a single individual can become the manner of many. The influence of a peculiar manner over

> a school may be seen in the music of the followers of Spohr and Mendelssohn and those of Schumann and Wagner.[8]

Spohr's individualities are not, in fact, any more idiosyncratic than those of his great contemporaries. It is just as easy to recognise the music of Mendelssohn, Schumann or Wagner after a few bars as that of Spohr; indeed, to the modern ear it may seem that Spohr possesses less of a distinctively individual voice than these composers, since his music, being less familiar, appears to be redolent not only of the composers by whom he was influenced, but also, by an anachronistic illusion, of those whom he influenced. Nevertheless, if when these apparent reminiscences of other composers are encountered, dates are compared, it will almost invariably be found that Spohr's work was composed first. As Hauptmann commented in the 1860's:

> Much of his harmony has become common property... and people use it without so much as knowing it is Spohr's. Even Schumann in his later period, in Paradise and the Peri for instance, acts Spohr now and then, to the mutual satisfaction of himself and his audience.[9]

The label of mannerist in itself, therefore, neither precluded Spohr's influence nor devalued his achievement in the eyes of his own contemporaries, who in any case were tarred with the same brush. But apart from this designation there were related charges which were constantly made against his music, even by those who revered him and benefited from his example. These were critical not so much of the style itself but of the limited inventiveness which Spohr displayed in its employment. In a sense the secret both of his success and of his failure lay in the concentrated intensity with which he exploited the possibilities of chromatic harmony to create his particular mode of expression. Other composers are recognisable in a variety of moods: Spohr has his own distinctive sentiment outside which he seldom ventures. With him the unremitting application of his chromatic technique and a frequent lack of vital rhythmic contrast lends his work a uniformity of feeling which is unmistakable and inevitably repetitious. Whereas with Schumann, for instance, Florestan and Eusebius express different facets of the composer in such a way that the style is convincingly differentiated yet possesses a clearly disting-

uishable artistic unity; with Spohr it is impossible to be unaware for long of the author's predominant mood of dreamy sentimentality, except in music with a descriptive intention, and even here his range of expression is confined within relatively narrow limits.

Schumann frequently commented on this tendency in his reviews of Spohr's works, saying of the Historical Symphony,* for example:

> He remains the master as we have always known him and loved him. In fact these forms to which he is not accustomed bring out his individuality even more strongly just as one with a particularly characteristic bearing reveals himself most clearly when he assumes a disguise. Once Napoleon went to a masked ball; he had been there hardly a moment before he...clasped his arms together. Like a brush fire the cry spread through the hall; 'the emperor!' Similarly, when this symphony was played, one could hear from every corner of the hall the sound 'Spohr' and again 'Spohr.'[10]

Many of his contemporaries found Spohr's characteristic mood extremely attractive. His own music as a whole may have suffered from its over-exploitation, but there is no doubt that he had created something original which pointed the way towards new possibilities of Romantic expression. As H.C. Banister observed:

> the mannerism of his compositions of all kinds, pretty generally acknowledged by all competent judges, a mannerism of harmonic progression and modulating method which may be briefly characterized by the two words chromatic and enharmonic, was alluring and not difficult to imitate.[11]

Many musicians must have been captivated by what John Ella referred to as 'the graceful melodic forms, fascinating progressions and rich cadences of harmony in the music of Spohr',[12] or would have admitted with Charles Hallé that they had been 'fascinated by his luscious melodies and wonderfully sweet harmonies and modulations'.[13] And Hauptmann, whose feelings are probably representative, recalled his earlier devotion to Spohr in a letter to Hauser where he remarked,

* The Historical Symphony (No. 6, op.116) composed in 1839, aimed to capture the style and taste (Styl und Geschmack) of four different periods, the movements being Largo grave - Allegro mod. Pastorale, Bach-Handel 'sche Periode 1720: Adagio, Haydn-Mozart' sche Periode 1780: Scherzo, Beethoven'sche Periode 1810: Finale, Allegro vivace, Allerneueste Periode, 1840.

'Do you remember that it was a long time before we would listen to anything else? I at least recollect the days when I raved about him, with those charming, full, soft melodies of his'. But he was at odds with Banister in saying: 'It may safely be assumed that there is no one who can imitate him, easy as many a man may have thought it...it seems easy - that is the secret of his power'.[14]

The sentiment with which these features imbued Spohr's music was variously apprehended by his contemporaries. Hanslick described him as 'the noble dreamer and bard',[15] while in a review of the concert overture Die Tochter der Luft, Schumann observed: 'in his elegiac violins and sighing clarinets we recognise once more the noble suffering Spohr'.[16] Nobility and melancholy seem to have been the most widespread impression made by his music, though Spohr himself was not able to perceive why so many people thought of him as a lugubrious composer. In the Autobiography he referred to a review from as early as 1809 in which it had been remarked:

> He is in truth a musician of high merit. He has nevertheless a peculiarity, and one which by degrees perhaps will lead him to uniformity of style; namely, his latest compositions so far as we are acquainted with them are one and all of a melancholy character. Even the Pot-Pourri which he played at the end of the concert, partook somewhat of it.[17]

He then went on to comment on this, giving a fascinating insight into his character and pattern of thought, suggesting a complacency and lack of self-knowledge which is almost incredible. He wrote:

> This remark upon the melancholy character of my compositions, which is here made for the first time, and so often repeated at a later period in criticisms upon my works, as to become regularly stereotyped, has always been a riddle to me; for, to me, my compositions appear for the most part quite as cheerful as those of any other composer. Those in particular which I played in Breslau, with the exception of two subjects, were all of so lively a character, that I am unable to understand the above remark. The two first Allegros alone of the Concertante in H- /sic/ and G- minor are serious, the former perhaps even somewhat mournful, but the other subjects are all of them, lively. The same may be said from beginning to end of the Concertante for two violins in A major...and more than that, the third movement is even saucily playful. Neither does the composition for the harp, nor the overture to Alruna bear any trace of melancholy; how then does the

reviewer come by his remark? - Nevertheless, as something similar has been maintained respecting my compositions even up to the present time, so that people who have not known me personally, have considered me a misanthrope, or an hypochondriac, though I am happy to say I am always of a cheerful tone of mind; there must be something in it, and I think it is, that people have taken the prevailing dreaminess and sentimental character of my compositions, and my predilection for the minor keys, as outbursts of melancholy. If it is so I am content to bear with it though at first it always annoyed me.[18]

That Spohr was generally unable to see other people's points of view is confirmed by Hauptmann's exasperated observation 'It is impossible to talk of Spohr, he is so hardened with prejudices'.[19] It certainly seems astonishing that Spohr could go on producing compositions with the same 'prevailing dreaminess and sentimental character' without realising that he was frequently threshing out empty husks.

To understand how Spohr's audience perceived the predominant sentiment of his music, however, is not simple. His own assertion that the whole of the A major Concertante is lively and free from seriousness will not bear scrutiny: the opening of the first movement, in the minor, is coloured with passionate sentiment, as are later passages in the movement, while the second movement is dreamily Romantic throughout, tinged with darker emotions in the minor middle section with its chains of suspensions over a moving pizzicato bass. On the whole, though, Spohr's own feeling that his music tended to be sentimental rather than melancholy seems a justifiable one, and it is hard to feel sympathy with the English reviewer who wrote:

> The 'woe and wailing' of his oratorio music, his sobbing and moanings in quartett writing, is as detestable as it is beyond pardon, and we should not much regret the loss of every bar he ever wrote in both styles.[20]

Probably the rich chromaticism was initially misapprehended by many of his earliest audiences and the intensely expressive idiom made such unprecedented demands on its auditors that they could not accurately divine its intentions.

Powerfully as Spohr's style acted at first acquaintance as it continued to

do with successive generations of young musicians into the 1850's according to Ella's testimony,[21] the repetitivness of his music as a whole tended to lead to a gradual disillusionment. Chorley saw that familiarity must eventually breed indifference if not contempt, maintaining that his compositions

> on short experience, may be instantaneously recognised by their strong family likeness one to the other, and will be far longer remembered by their manner than by their matter. When this manner has been once mastered, the decline and fall of admiration is merely a question of time. Some men can worship a set smile longer than others, but all end sooner or later in worshipping it less than they did when it began to smile on them.*[22]

Hauptmann, too, used a helpful analogy to describe the same thing, saying:

> Spohr's compositions with all their faults are often praised on account of the lofty spirit which permeates them all. In my judgement there would be less to blame if there were not so much to praise. I think the want of base metal, of a certain alloy in Spohr's works, is a very real want indeed. When I say base metal, I do not, of course, mean anything despicable; I mean a certain contrast, without which gold is not gold. People applaud his wealth of beautiful harmony, but then it is always just the same, and just as in his true gold we miss the alloy, so in his full harmonies we miss those empty spaces, those powerful contrasts, which are to be found in all great composers... Pure gold (Spohr) is just as one-sided, just as incomplete, as unmixed alloy (Wenzel Muller).[23]

In fact the flaws in Spohr's music were all too apparent when his works were heard in bulk. It was not just that he repeated particular phrases and modulations, other composers do so constantly, but that these were by the very nature of his style so distinctive that they could not be passed over as simple conventions which accompany and embellish the music without intruding on the consciousness of the listener out of proportion to their importance. Thus Rellstab observed of the songs op.103 and op.105:

> It is not difficult to find the weakness of Spohr's songs; one can show that the master repeats himself, that he remains true to his old manner, to certain forms and phrases especially loved by him to the point of boredom.[24]

And Chorley noted that in the air 'O what is man' from The Fall of Babylon,

* It is ironic, and indicative of the nineteenth-century preoccupation with mannerism, that The Dictionary of National Biography remarked of Chorley that 'the individuality of his style degenerated into mannerism'.

> every phrase, every close, every harmony, and every combination, was an old acquaintance; having been used by the composer some twenty times before.[25]

He observed that the listener would soon discover that 'the chromatic progressions and elaborations which at first strike him as so singular...are but so many resources to conceal poverty of invention and monotony of execution'.[26]

Before tracing the development of Spohr's characteristic idiom and examining its peculiarities in detail, however, it will be useful to attempt an identification of some of the influences which helped to form his style.

None of Spohr's close relatives were musical; his father, like Berlioz's, was a country doctor, but unlike Berlioz his gifts were recognised at an early age and encouraged by his parents. However, there was no one at home who could give him instruction, nor did his father have the knowledge, the contacts, or the money to place him with a good teacher. It seems from the Autobiography that the only formal lessons which he had in harmony and counterpoint were from a local organist called Hartung. These lasted less than a year and do not appear to have been particularly fruitful. As Spohr himself humorously remarked: 'he corrected me...so mercilessly, and scratched out so many ideas which appeared to me sublime, that I lost all desire to show him anything further. Not long afterwards, our lessons were brought to a close by the ill health of the old man; and these were the only lessons in theory I ever had'. He continued his studies on his own initiative, being, as he said, 'obliged to seek for instruction in theoretical works',[27] but he gained particular advantage from the reading of 'good scores' which be obtained from the theatre library in Brunswick, and he was also allowed to play in the theatre orchestra for his own practice and 'thereby became familiar with much good music'.[28]
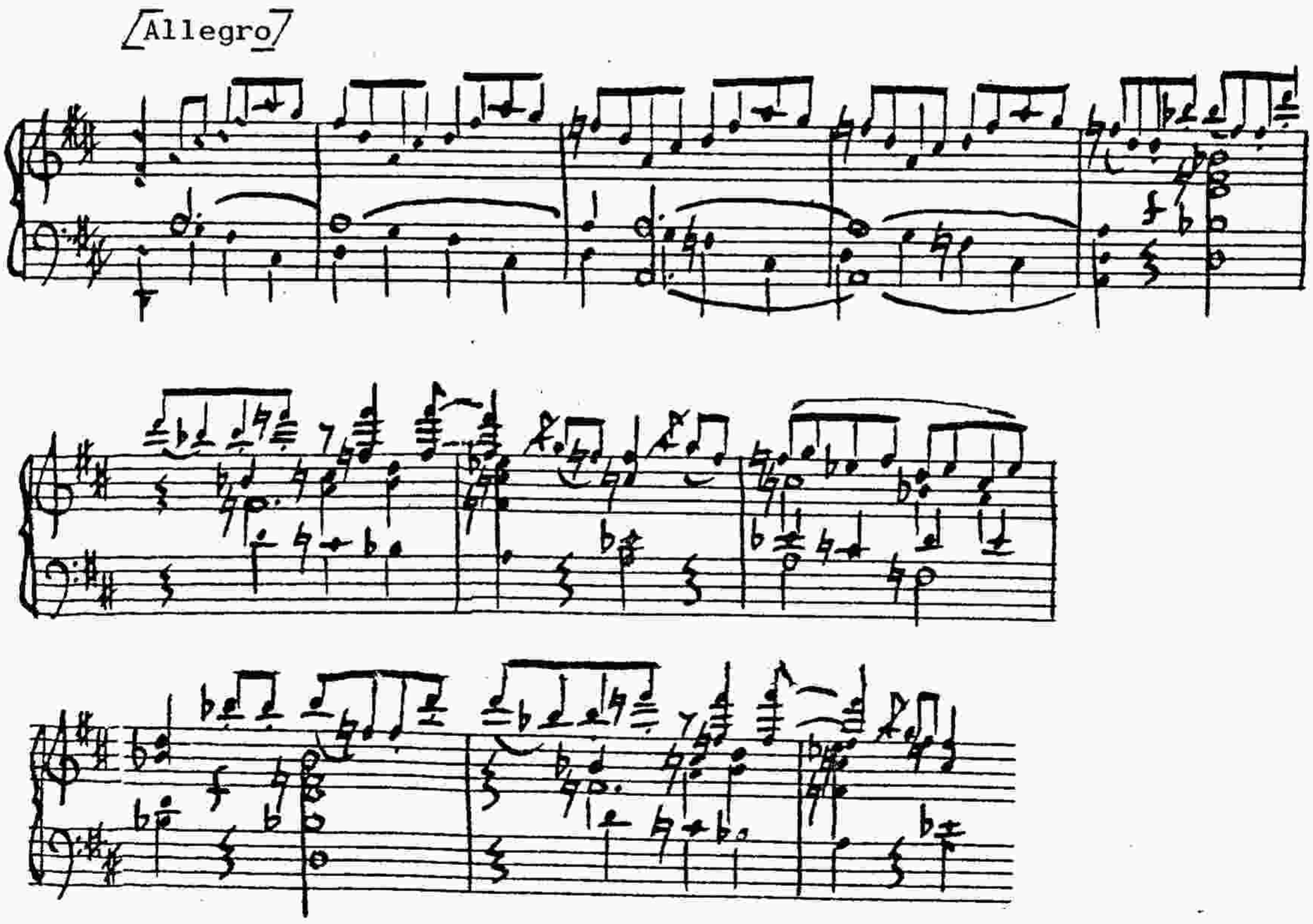
At the age of 15 he was appointed Kammermusicus to the Duke of Brunswick, whom he had impressed with his violin playing, and his duties entailed playing in the court concerts and in the theatre orchestra. Spohr

mentioned that a French operatic company had just been employed there at about that time and remarked:

> I therefore became earlier acquainted with the French dramatical music than with the German; and this was not without influence on the tendency of my taste, and upon my compositions of that time.[29]

This tallies very well with Hauptmann's comment that Spohr had 'told me himself that he remembered the day when he valued Cherubini more than Mozart',[30] and his assumption that 'Spohr probably got his tendency towards what he calls "interesting harmonic progressions" from Cherubini'. There are certainly features in Spohr's music which seem directly referable to Cherubini. The following passage from the overture Die Prüfung (1806), all that he preserved of his first attempt at an opera may have owed a debt to Cherubini's example:

Ex. 1 Spohr, Overture Die Prüfung
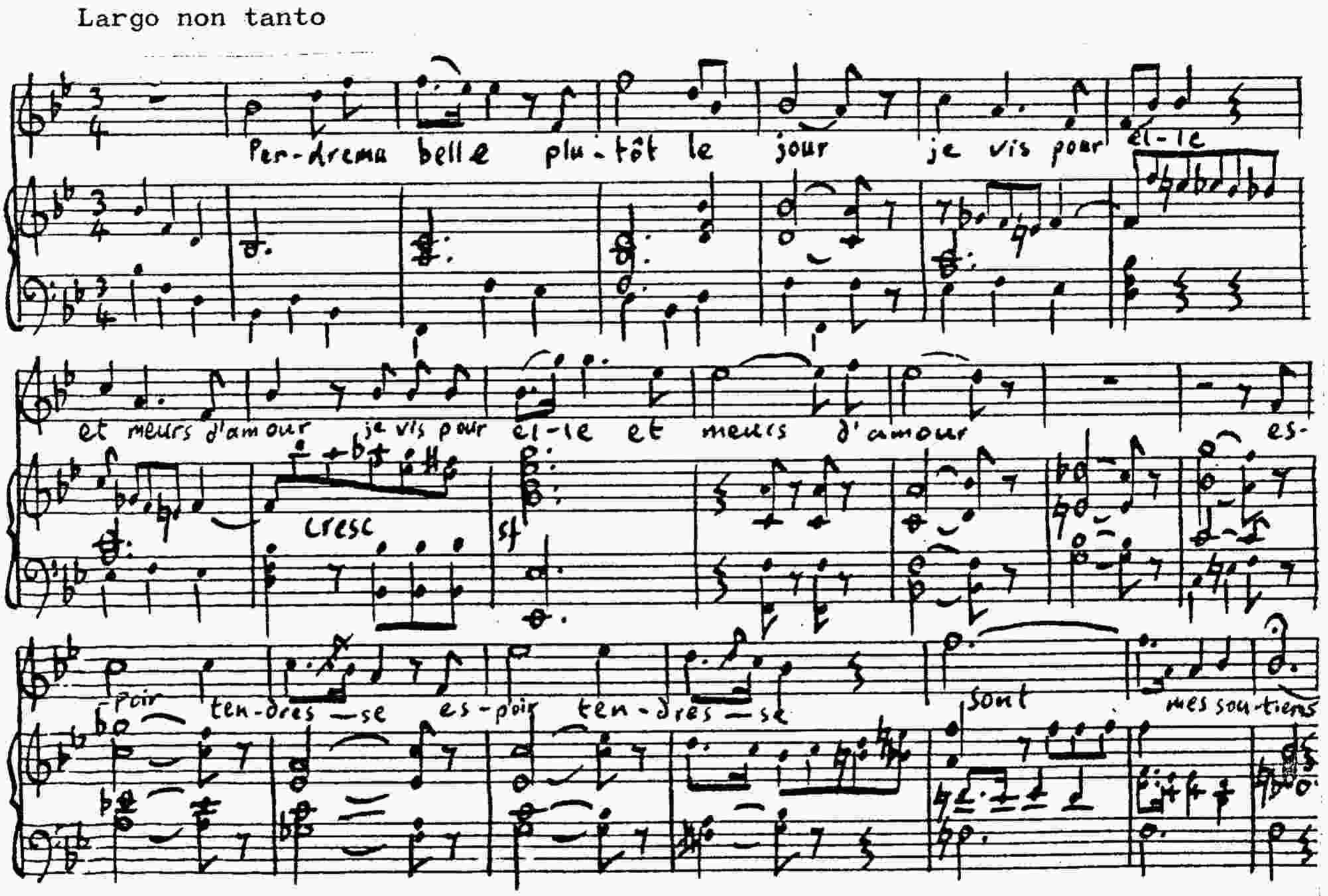


Many passages in Cherubini's overtures reveal a comparable handling of material. Similar melodic figures can often be found, the bars in B flat with the acciacaturas being particularly characteristic; the excursion to the flat

submediant via two bars of tonic minor also seems especially reminiscent of the older composer, probably an early example of Spohr's tendency towards 'interesting harmonic progressions'.

Certain aspects of Spohr's chromaticism, too, appear closer to Cherubini than to others of his predecessors. The following extract from Cherubini's Lodoiska shows the sort of thing which seems to have a kinship with Spohr:

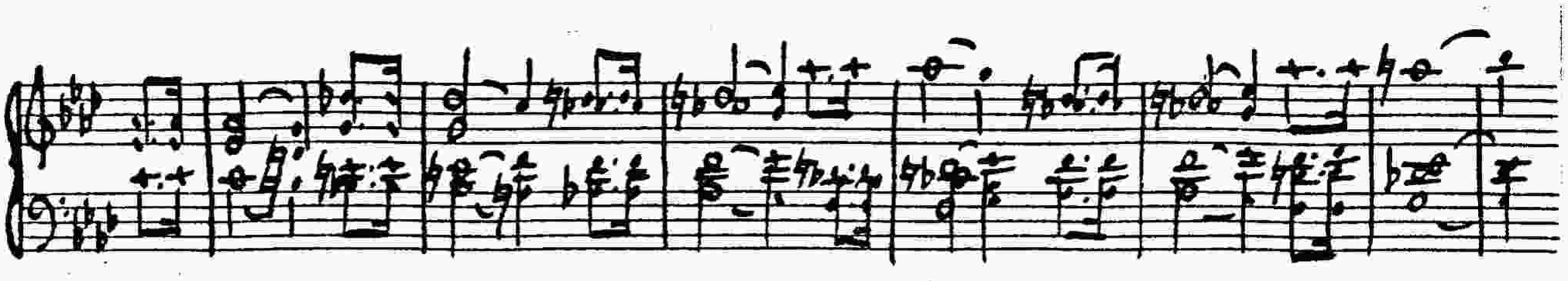
Ex. 2 Cherubini, Lodoiska No. 6



The chromatic figures in bars 6 to 9 are frequently echoed in Spohr. while the unsubtle use of the minor ninth seems to have had similar attractions for him. An extract from Cherubini's overture to Medea (ex. 3) also illustrates his use of diminished chords in a way which probably influenced Spohr, and the upward resolving appoggiatura on to the fifth of a dominant seventh in the final bars is very frequently to be met with in Spohr's music; an instance of this from the first movement of the String Quartet op.82 no. 2 (ex. 4a)

and another from The Fall of Babylon (Ex. 4b) is given.

Ex. 3 Cherubini, Overture Medea
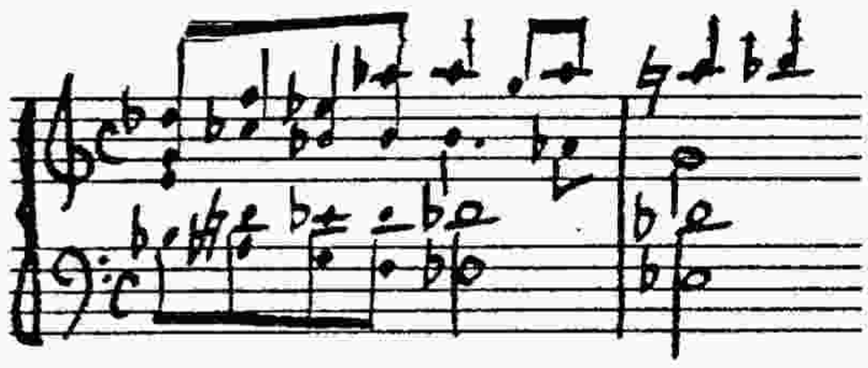


Ex. 4 a) Spohr String Quartet op.82 no. 2

/Allegro/



b) Spohr, The Fall of Babylon no. 2

Adagio
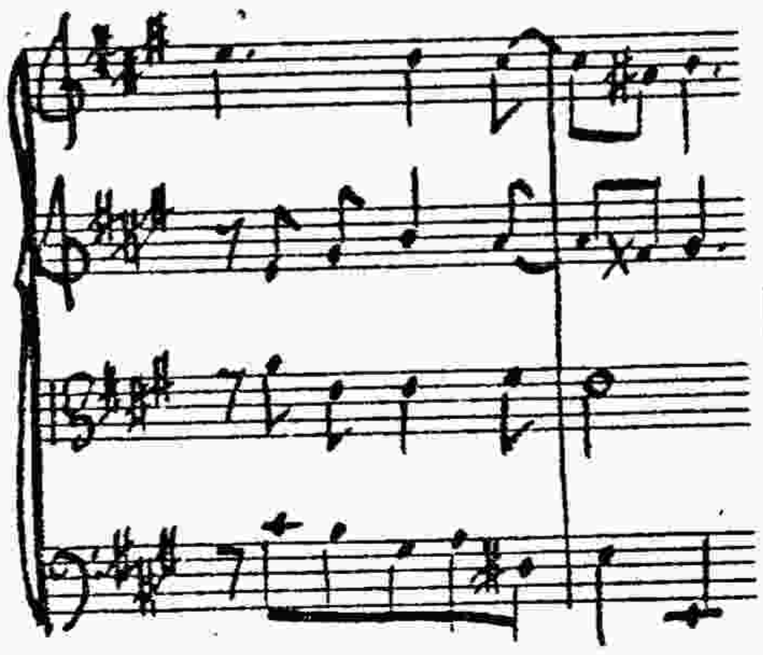


(The anticipation of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde is not unworthy of notice).

Haydn, too, was not without influence on his harmonic and melodic style. The chromatic resolution doubled in thirds from Haydn's String Quartet op.64 no. 5 is of a kind frequently to be found in Spohr; (see Ex. 24 below)

Ex. 5 Haydn, String Quartet op. 64 no. 5
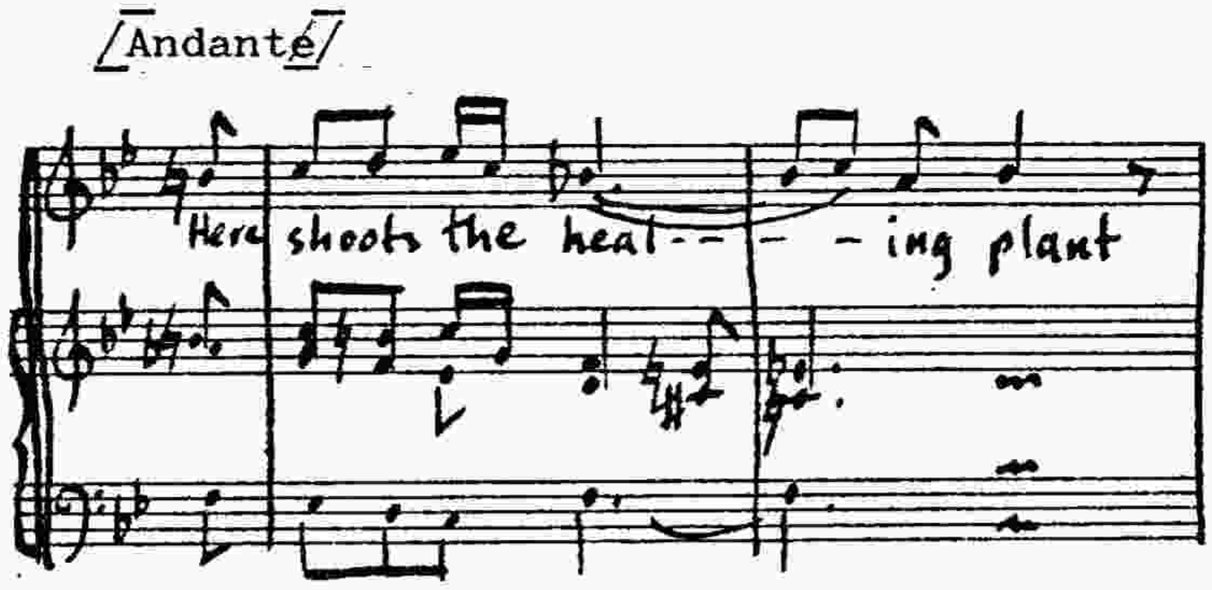
/Adagio/



Spohr would certainly have played Haydn's quartets at an early stage in his career. Later he came to know The Creation, which he conducted at the first Frankenhausen Musical Festival in 1811. Haydn's oratorio contains many features which seem to be the progenitors of elements in Spohr's music. Two
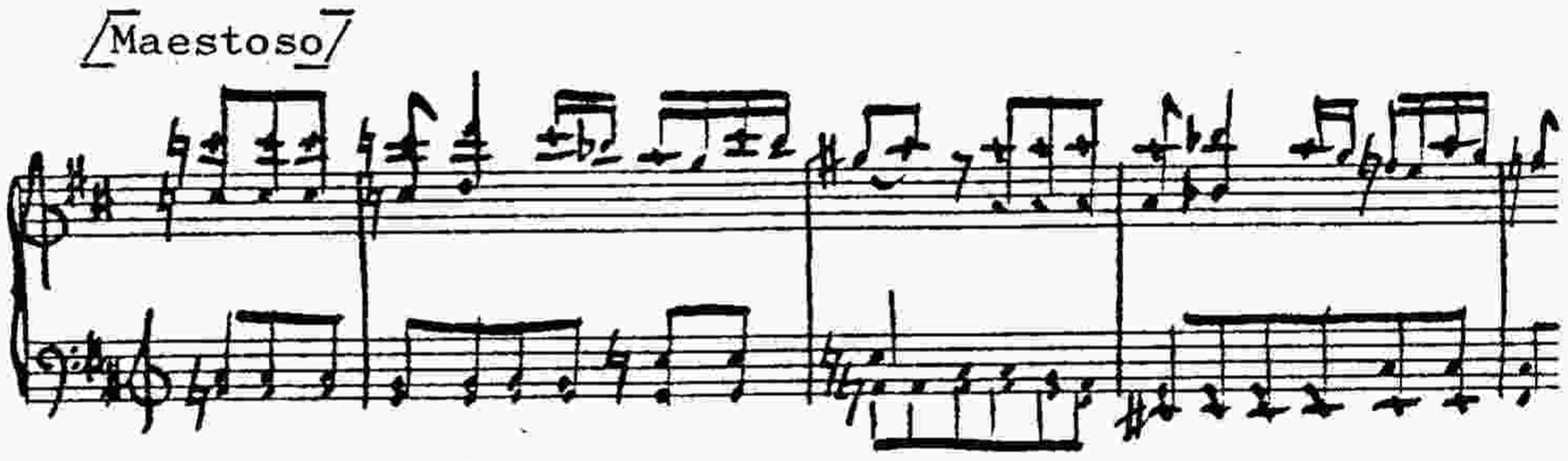
clear examples may be cited. The chromatic cadence which occurs twice in 'With verdure clad' is constantly employed by Spohr (see Ex. 23 below):

Ex. 6 Haydn, The Creation, 'With verdure clad'.
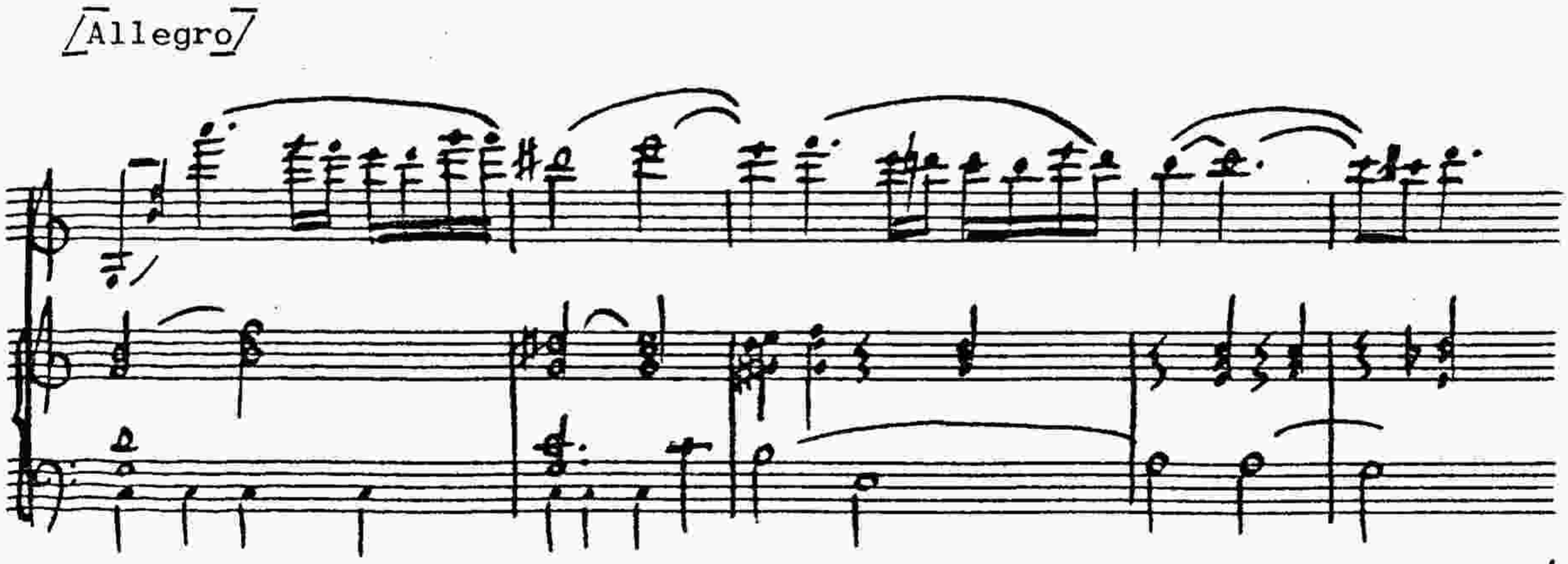


A phrase from 'Now Heav'n in fullest glory shone' is a close relative of one from Spohr's Seventh Violin Concerto:

Ex. 7 Haydn, The Creation, 'Now Heav'n in fullest glory'



Ex. 8 Spohr, Violin Concerto no. 7



The Creation contains many other general similarities to aspects of Spohr's style.

The most important influence on Spohr, however, both musically and spiritually, was undoubtedly Mozart. The engagement of a German opera company from Magdeburg to perform in the Brunswick theatre in 1798 gave him the opportunity to become acquainted with Mozart's operas, and he recollected that:
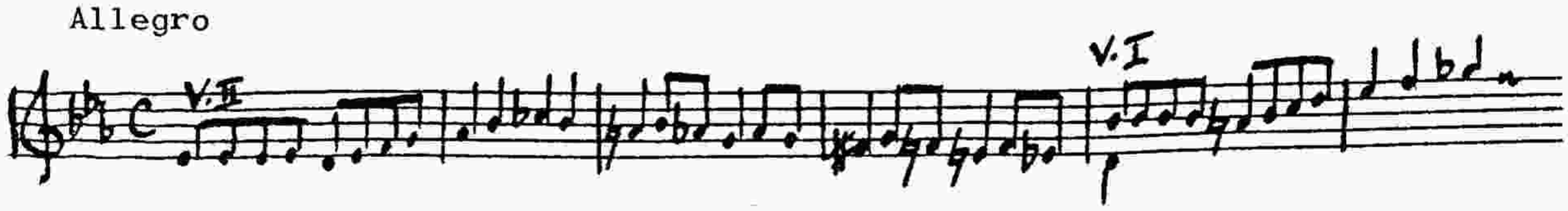
> the grandeur of Mozart's operatic music burst upon me. Mozart now became for my lifetime my ideal and model. Even now I remember the transport and dreamy enchantment with which I heard for the first time the Zauberflöte and Don Juan; and that I had no rest until I had got the scores lent to me and had brooded over them half the night long.[31]

In many of Spohr's earlier works Mozart is very close to the surface and that fact was often commented on by contemporary critics in England as well as in Germany (see Chapter 2 above). In his Autobiography Spohr mentioned that after a performance of his overture Alruna in Breslau, a critic said that it was 'not free from reminiscences' and Spohr went on to observe:

> He might have said right out, it is an exact imitation of the overture to Zauberflöte: for that was the object I had in view. In my admiration for Mozart, and the feeling of wonder with which I regarded that overture, an imitation of it seemed to me something very natural and praiseworthy, and at the time when I sought to develop my talent for composition I had made many similar imitations of Mozart's masterpieces...shortly after that time I became sensible that a composer should endeavour to be original both in the form of his musical pieces, and in the development of his musical ideas...[32]

It is only necessary to quote the opening few bars of the Allegro of Spohr's overture to show the closeness of the link with Mozart's. But, at the same time, the differences are significant. Mozart would not have used the rather stilted chromatic sequence in bars 3 and 4 or the flat 6th in bar 2.

Ex. 9 Spohr, Overture Alruna



He also admitted the influence in his opera Der Zweitkampf mit der Geliebten given at Hamburg in 1811, of which he wrote:

> Schwenke wrote a full and very laudatory criticism of the opera, wherein he adroitly combatted the well founded opinion of its opponents, that it contained many reminiscences of the operas of Mozart, and while admitting that the forms of the musical pieces as well as the whole design recalled Mozart, he assigned that as a recommendatory feature and proof

> of its excellence. By this, made watchful of myself, I became sensible of the necessity to break myself of it, and think that I already fully effected it in Faust, my next dramatic work.[33]

Despite his avowal to the contrary, the inspiration which he derived from Mozart continued to be perceptible in Spohr's music after 1811. This is particularly true of form and melody in works written before 1820; while Mozart's influence was of crucial importance as the basis of Spohr's harmonic language. Some of his more dramatic harmonic gestures may be attributable to Cherubini, but the richly flowing chromaticism which is so prominent a feature of Spohr's style and his handling of enharmonic modulation were certainly the product of his understanding of Mozart. However, though there are many close parallels of detail with Mozart in Spohr's earlier works and a continuing similarity in their treatment of certain elements of chromaticism, the essence of Spohr's harmonic idiom as it became more personal was that it took what had normally been occasional and incidental in Mozart and made it the standard material of his musical language.*

Many examples could be cited from Spohr's earlier compositions in which Mozart's influence is clearly perceptible. The Concertante for Violin, Harp and orchestra in G (1807) is unmistakably Mozartian in its opening tutti; the op.48 Concertante for two violins and orchestra (1808) obviously owes much to Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for violin, viola and orchestra K.364, especially in the first movement; and the First Symphony (1811) is greatly indebted along with many other smaller scale works. The influence also remains close to the surface in Faust (1813) whatever Spohr may have thought, for example in the duet 'Folg' dem Freunde' and the scena and aria 'Die stille Nacht entweight', and in the chamber works of the same period, for example the first movement of the String Quintet op.33 no. 2.
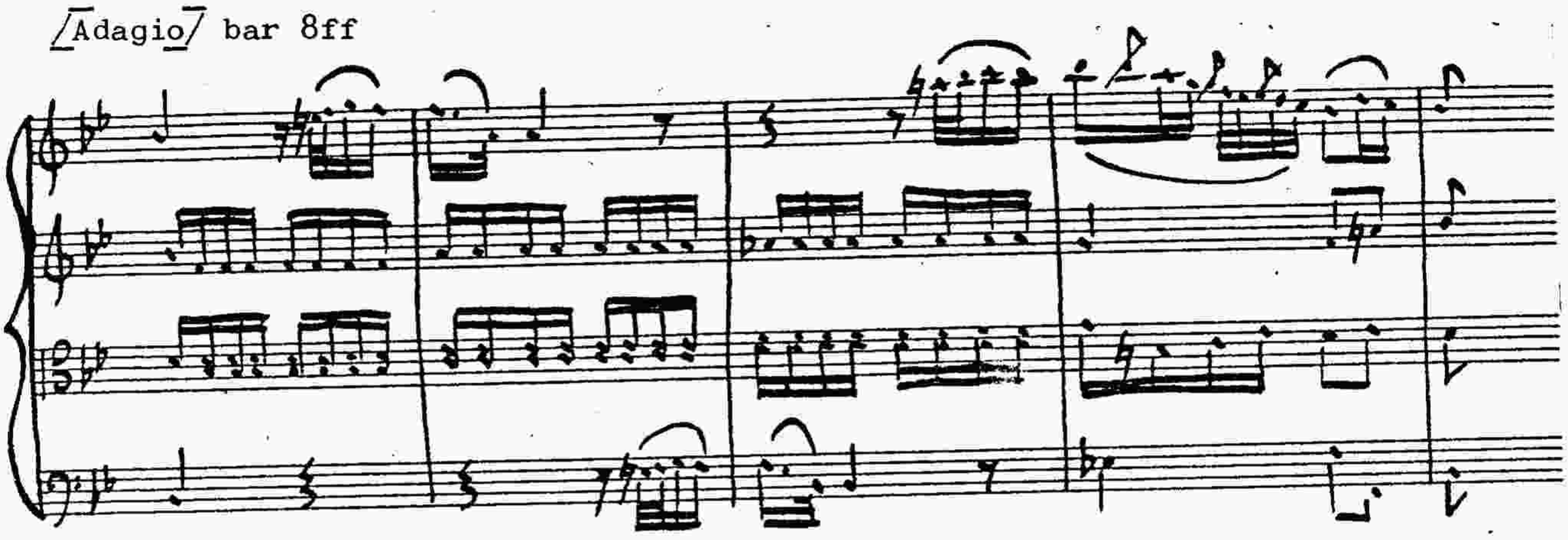
An illustration of these similarities may be given from the Adagio of the

* A good example of a movement in which Mozart's chromaticism is close to Spohr's is the first movement of the String Quartet K.387.

String Quartet op. 4 no. 2 (1807). This has strong affinities with parts of the Andante Cantabile from Mozart's String Quartet K.465. In bar 8, Spohr introduces a figure which seems familiar:

Ex. 10 Spohr, String Quartet op.4 no. 2

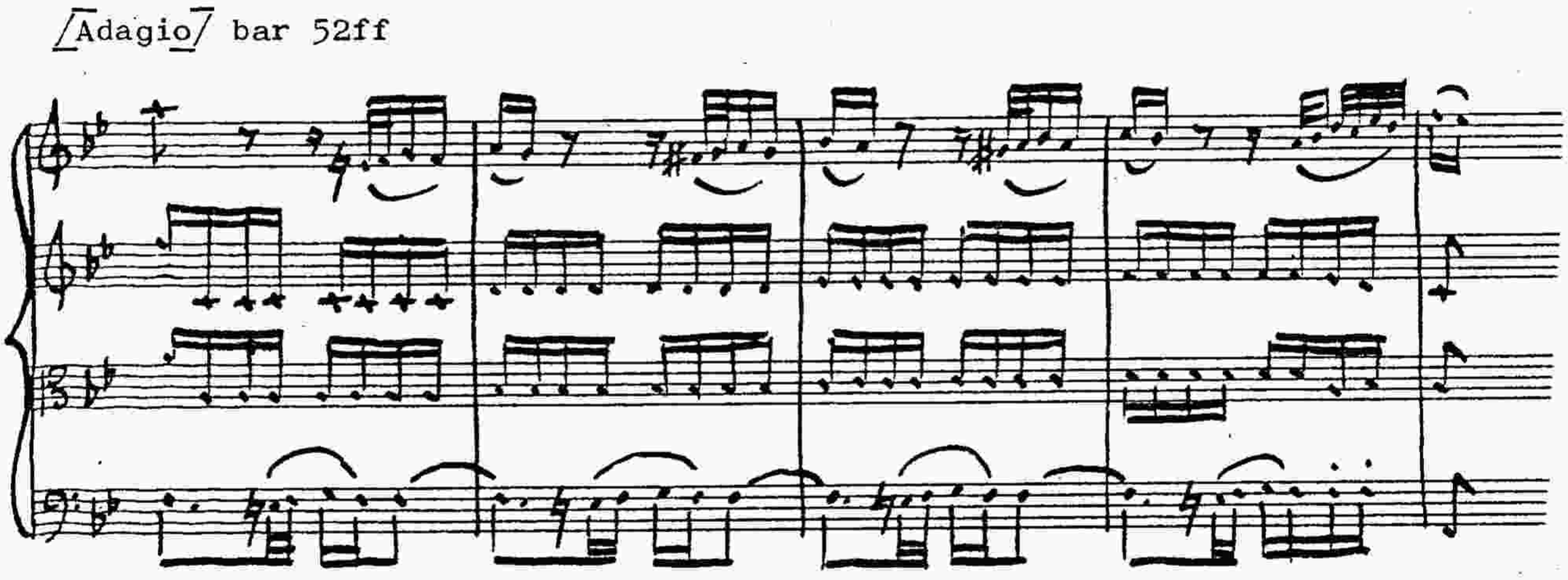
/Adagio/ bar 8ff



Later in the movement at bar 52, its provenance becomes clear, as a comparison with the passage at bar 38 in the Mozart shows.

Ex. 11 Spohr, String Quartet op.4 no. 2

/Adagio/ bar 52ff



Shortly after his discovery of Mozart's operas, Spohr also commenced his acquaintance with Beethoven's music. The op.18 quartets must have been played in Brunswick almost immediately on their publication, for Spohr commented:

> I heard for the first time the quartettos of Beethoven, and from that time raved no less about them than I had before done about those of Haydn and Mozart.[34]

Beethoven's influence, however, is not so easily detected in his music as is Mozart's or Haydn's. Their temperaments were poles apart. Whereas Beethoven's predilection was for diatonic discords and appoggiaturas, Spohr's invariably

inclined towards the chromatic; in Beethoven the formation of unaccented diminished sevenths from chromatic passing notes or appoggiaturas in the melody is conspicuously rare, while in Mozart and even more in Spohr it is a common occurence. Indeed this was the only feature of Spohr's music about which any of Beethoven's comments have been preserved. He remarked to K.G. Freudenberg in 1825 that: 'He is too rich in dissonances, pleasure in his music is marred by his chromatic melody'.[35] In fact Beethoven and Spohr moved in opposite directions. As time went on Beethoven tended more and more towards a broader harmonic canvas, while Spohr became increasingly preoccupied with harmonic detail. The op.18 quartets are the point at which they are closest; it is not surprising that Spohr should have regarded them far more highly than Beethoven's later essays in the form.

An influence which left far more tangible marks on Spohr's style than did Beethoven was the French violinist and composer Pierre Rode. It is arguable, indeed, that his influence was hardly less important than Mozart's. Spohr himself averred his admiration for Rode's violin playing and confessed that he had modelled his own performance style on that of the Frenchman. He described it thus in the Autobiography:

> the more I heard him play, the more was I captivated with his playing. Yes! I had no hesitation to place Rode's style of play (then still reflecting all the brilliancy of that of his great master Viotti) above that of my instructor Eck, and to apply myself sedulously to acquire it as much as possible by a careful practice of Rode's compositions... I succeeded more especially in executing in his style the eighth concerto, the three first quartets, and the world famed variations in G major.[36]

The influence of Rode on Spohr's compositions is particularly strong in his writing for violin of course, but also, because violin figurations colour Spohr's melodic thought in general, there is a tendency for it to seep into other aspects of his work. The reference above to Rode's Eighth Concerto is noteworthy, since that concerto contains an especially large number of passages which are strikingly similar to passages in Spohr. Many of these were the stock in trade of violinists but it was through Rode's agency that Spohr picked them up. A few examples will suffice to demonstrate this.

Ex. 12 Rode, Violin Concerto no. 8, 1st movement

Moderato

a)
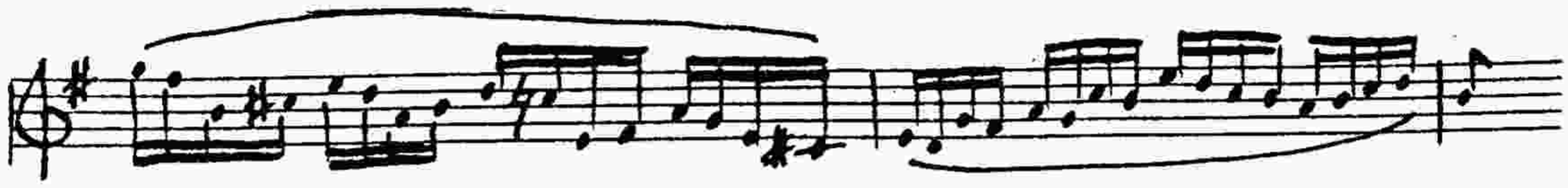


b)



c)



d)



e)
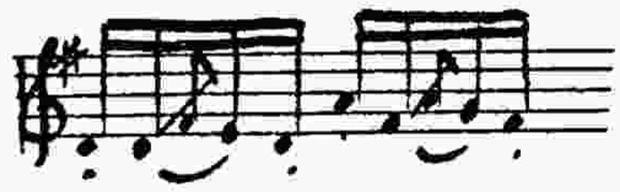


Similar passage-work can be found throughout Spohr's violin music of which the following are a few instances.

Ex. 13 a) Spohr, Violin Concerto no. 7, 1st movement

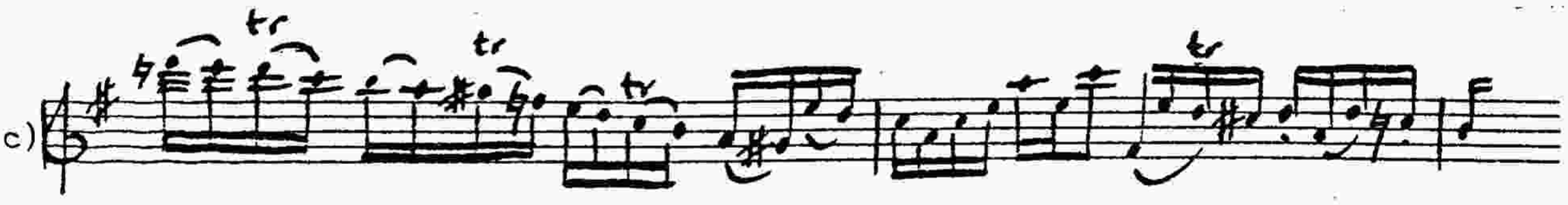
Allegro
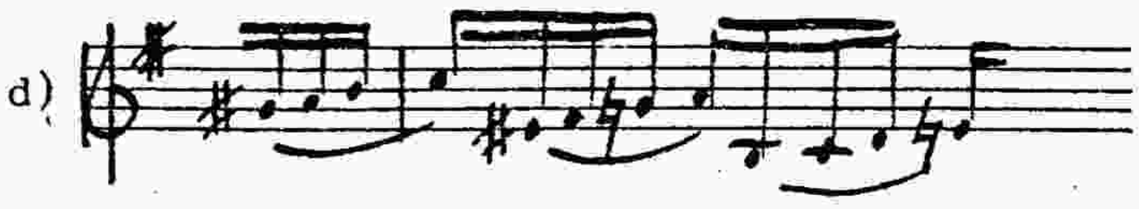


b)



c)



d)



e) Double Quartet op.65 1st movement

Allegro



f) String Quartet op.11 1st movement

Allegro moderato



Another rhythmic and melodic idea which constantly appears in Spohr has unmistakable antecedents in Rode and other French composers of the period.

Ex. 14 Rode, Violin Concerto no. 7, Rondo
Con Spirito
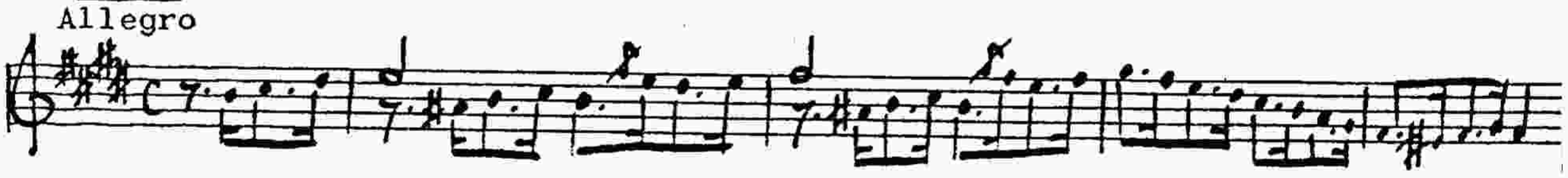


It has several variants, but these all possess a dotted upbeat figure and a close family likeness in general; it usually occurs as the last movement of an instrumental piece in which the violin is prominent, though it sometimes finds itself transposed to other contexts such as the extract from Faust given below (Ex. 15b). The following are a few representative examples.

Ex. 15 a) Spohr, String Quartet op.4 no. 2.
Presto



b) Faust, no. 9
Allegro



c) String Quartet op.61, Finale
Allegretto
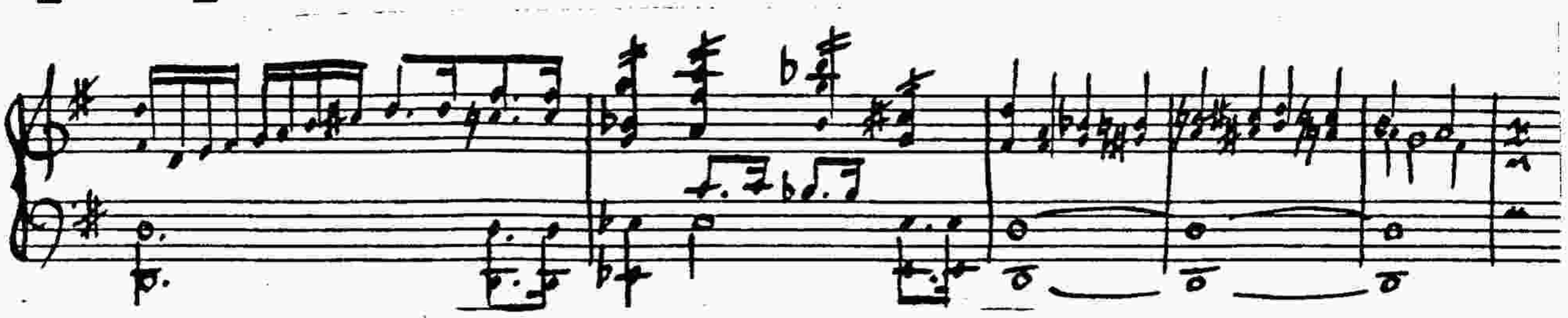


d) Sonata concertante op.115 (1809) Finale
Allegretto
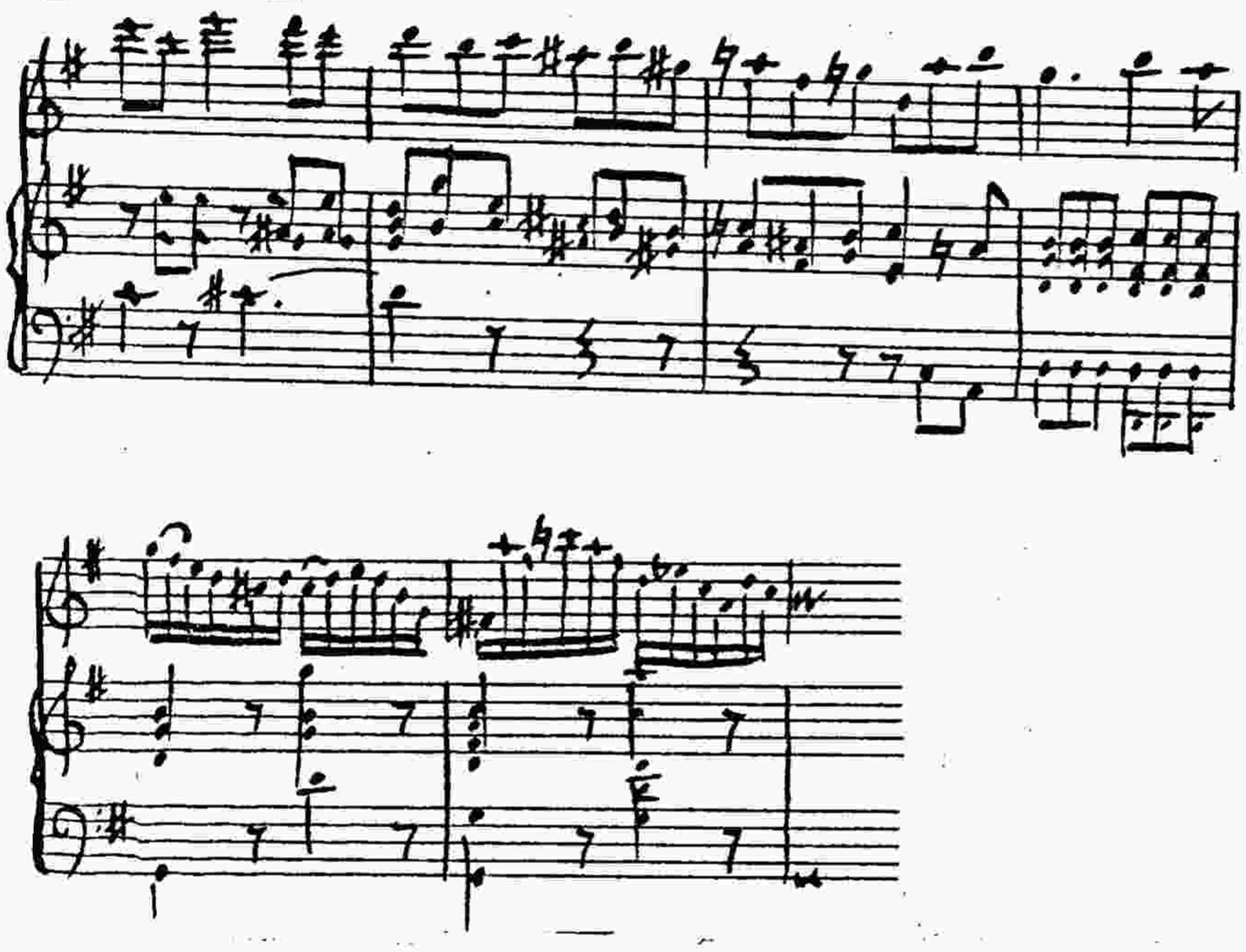


It is less likely that Rode had any important influence on Spohr's harmony, since Rode's own feeling for harmony was nowhere near as highly developed as

Spohr's, but passages are occasionally encountered in Rode's music which can be paralleled in Spohr's earlier works. Examples from Rode's Eighth Concerto are:

Ex. 16 a) Rode, Violin Concerto no. 8 1st movement



b) Ibid



There was one other important respect in which Spohr seems to have been influenced by Rode; it was probably from him that he derived, in part at least, his taste for what was described as 'noble melancholy'. He commented in his Violin School, when discussing concerto playing, that the first movement of Rode's Violin Concerto op.9 should be played in such a way as to emphasise that it has a 'serious, elevated, and, in the ... subject and its repetition a somewhat melancholy character';[37] and he described the Rondo as 'fanciful and melancholy in its theme'.[38] (See Ex. 14 above) The similarity of such themes in the works of these two composers can clearly be seen from the following

extracts; in both cases this sort of opening theme may be regarded as typical.

Ex. 17 a) Rode, Violin Concerto no. 8



b) Spohr, String Quartet op.61



This 'noble seriousness' which was carried to a higher artistic level in Spohr than in Rode, was one of the features of his music most admired by contemporaries. If today this seems a facile type of expression it may be because the values which it attempted to express are no longer held in such high esteem as they were in Spohr's day; it is often difficult to enter into the emotional responses of another age.
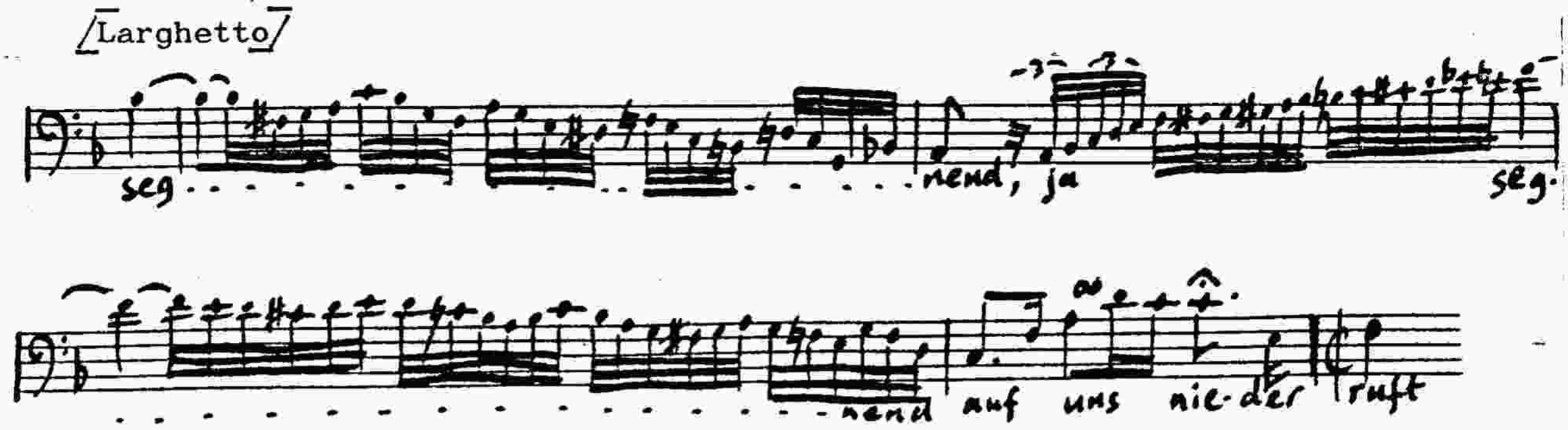
A peripheral influence on Spohr's vocal music after his visit to Italy in 1816 was Rossini. It can be seen especially in his increasing use of vocal ornament. This is apparent in the new aria 'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe' which he wrote for the production of Faust staged during his time as director of the opera at Frankfurt (1819) and also in the new opera Zemire und Azor. Spohr had heard a great deal of Rossini's music in Italy, and about that time it was first making its way into Germany. He confessed in the Autobiography:

> Little as I was an admirer of Rossini's music, as the severe criticism thereof in the diary of the Italian journey shews, yet the applause which Tancred had met with in Frankfurt was not wholly without influence on the style of my new opera. I was furthermore induced to this by the considerable power of execution possessed by the four singers...who were at my command.[39]

The following quotation from the new Faust aria shows the extent of this influence at the time, though it seems to have been a passing phase; there is certainly

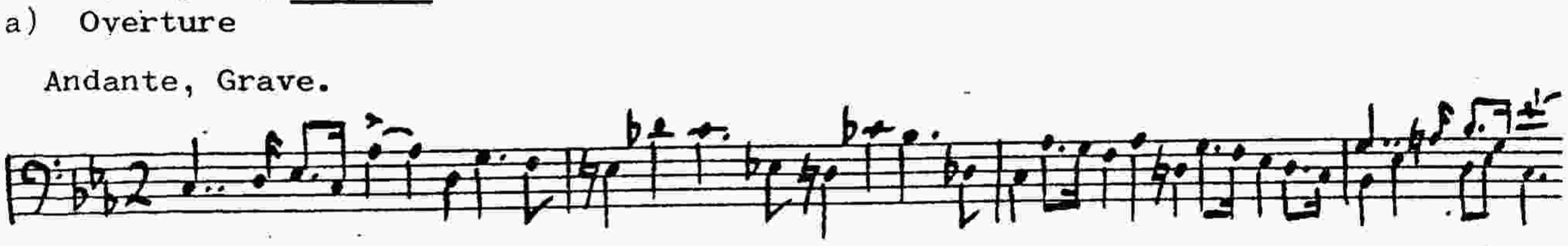
less virtuoso vocal display in his later operas.

Ex. 18 Spohr, Faust 'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe'
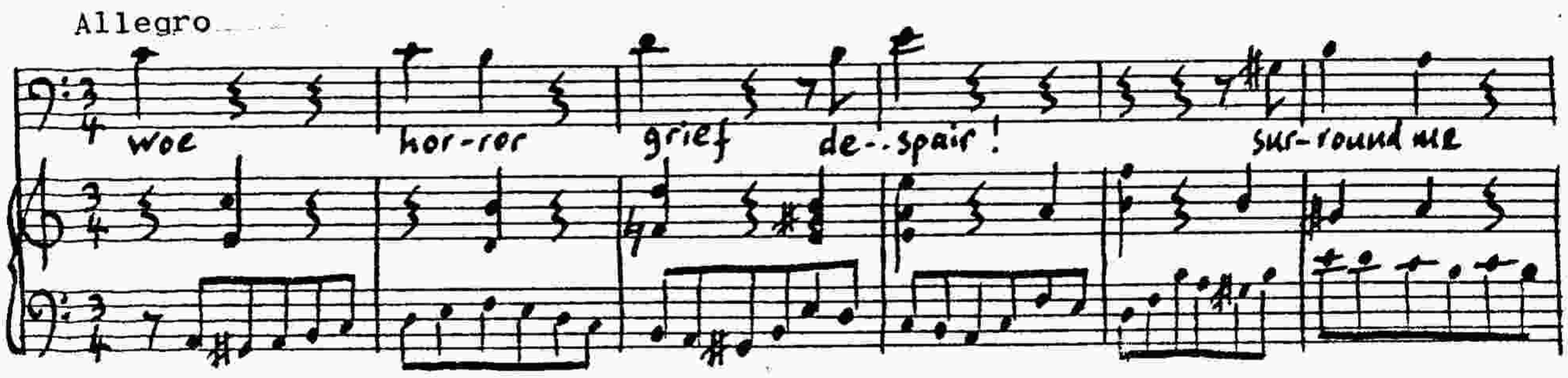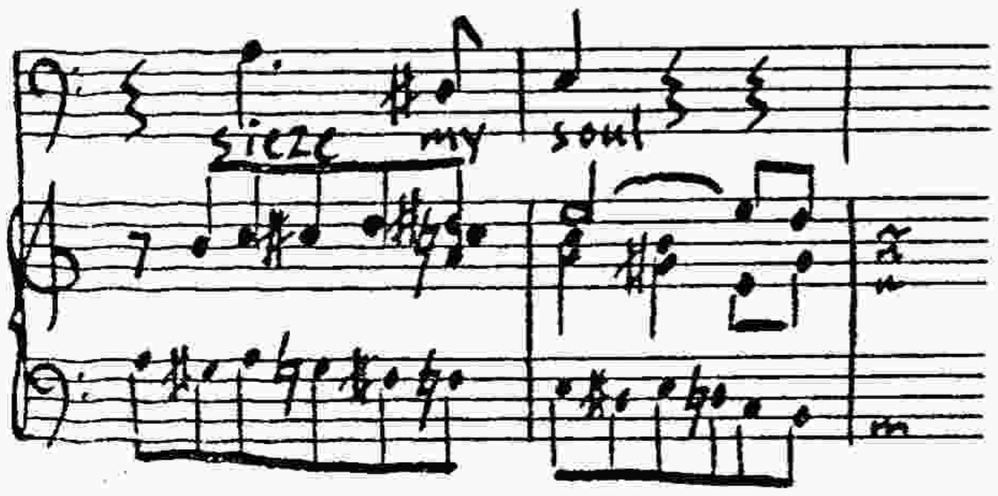


At a later date Spohr, like many of his contemporaries, derived inspiration from the music of J.S. Bach. He performed the St Matthew Passion in Kassel in 1843 after having made an unsuccessful attempt to produce it some years earlier. It is probable that he knew the work before composing his own oratorio Des Heilands letzte Stunden (Calvary) in 1835, since it contains several strikingly baroque passages. For example:

Ex. 19 Spohr, Calvary
a) Overture

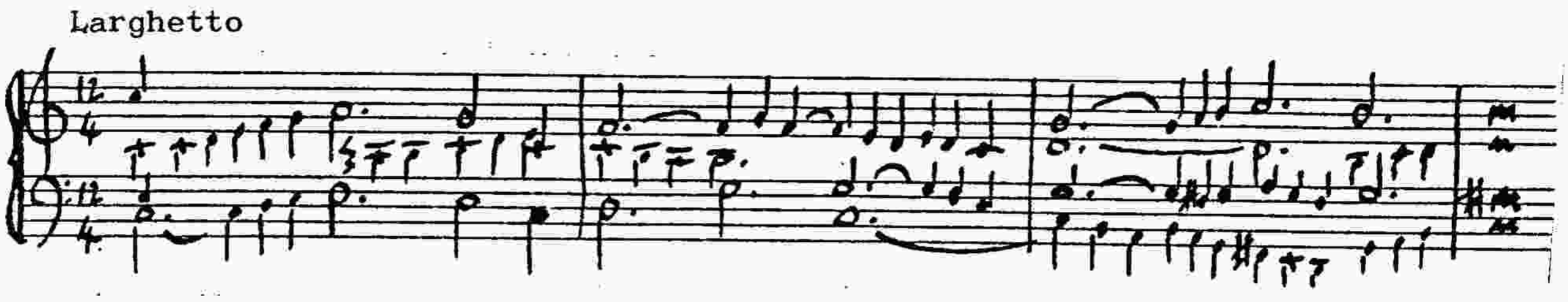


b) no. 2





c) no. 36



Ex. 19c in particular seems to owe something to Bach.

Many other less easily identifiable influences undoubtedly helped to mould Spohr's style, but what distinguishes Spohr from the majority of his contemporaries is that in his music the influences have been thoroughly absorbed and blended by his own musical personality to form an idiom which is highly individual. The salient features of this idiom will be made clearer by a closer examination of his output as a whole.

Spohr's own thematic catalogue assigns 1803 as the beginning of his career as a composer, though clearly he had made many earlier attempts at composition. It seems probable that the lost early works were predominantly, if not wholly, for the violin; and his chosen instrument continued to monopolise most of his attention for several years. Of the first 36 works listed in the catalogue, composed on his journey to St Petersburg with Eck, at Brunswick and at Gotha between 1803 and 1810, 28 feature the violin as the principal instrument. These were all intended for his own performance. They include the first six violin concerti as well as two unpublished ones, a Pot-Pourri for violin and orchestra on themes by Mozart, works for violin and harp written to perform with his wife Dorette and works scored for string quartet in which the first violin generally dominates. Some of the works for quartet were specifically designed as virtuoso showpieces with, in accordance with current practice, string trio rather than piano accompaniment; these include the Pot-Pourri op.5 and op.22, the variations op.6 and op.8 and the Quatuor Brillant op.11 (the first of 8). The sets of quartets op.4 and op.15 on the other hand, were intended to be true quartets in the legitimate German tradition, but his experience of attempts, which were almost invariably unsuccessful, to perform Beethoven's op.18 quartets on his early concert tours

with whatever local talent was available, led him to compose works for his own use in which the lower parts were not unduly taxed, and too often, even in the 'true' quartets, the virtuoso element asserts itself at the expense of balance and texture. This weakness was never really overcome in any of his 34 quartets. Indeed, his mastery of the violin was in many ways, a millstone round his neck as a composer, and it would not be unfair to maintain that, with a few exceptions, compositions in which the violin does not dominate are the most rewarding. When writing for his own instrument his imagination frequently seems fettered and the mind of the composer is subordinated to the technical peculiarities of the performer. Occasionally, in his best concerti and quartets, he did produce works of lasting value which achieve a balance of brilliance and creativity; but in many of the string quartets his reliance on stock violin figurations and the predominance of a single instrument are cardinal faults.

Between 1810 and his taking up the directorship of the Frankfurt opera in 1818 Spohr's catalogue lists another 36 works and of these only 15 feature the violin as the main instrument, and 6 of the 15 were written in 1816-1817 at the time of his concert tour of Italy. His gradual withdrawal from the role of virtuoso reduced the proportion of works for the instrument even more after his acceptance of the post of Kapellmeister at Kassel in 1822. Between 1818 and his death, out of 154 works listed, only 36 (including string quartets, but not piano trios, string quintets, double quartets or other chamber works in which interest is more evenly distributed) were for violin.

Carl Flesch, who recognised the important influence of the violin on Spohr's compositions, gave a fair description of the main characteristics of Spohr's violin style in the following passage.

> His themes have a romantic-melancholy colouring; his figurations, although they are not shaped up as a vital organic whole, as in Beethoven's Violin Concerto, nevertheless adapt themselves with regard to mood to the general fundamental character of the work. It is undeniably true that Spohr's compositional style was influenced by the violinistic means peculiar to himself in a manner which gave the structure of his

> works a certain monotony. This reveals itself above all in his repudiation of springing and his preference for broader bowings, firm rhythmic staccati, chromatic scales and short trills. The size of his hands, corresponding to his giant stature, frequently misled him to employ passages in tenths, which even in the present status of violin technique are still impossible of execution for small hands in the lower positions. His ability to spin out the tone, his preference for long breathed crescendi, on the other hand, influenced the structure of his slow movements.[40]

But though Spohr was a virtuoso with a brilliant and assured technique he never placed display above expression; his musical instincts went deeper than that. Nevertheless, in early works written for his own performance it was undoubtedly his intention that the audience should not be distracted too much from the soloist and in consequence the orchestral parts of the concerti up to op.28, the Sixth Concerto, remained unobtrusive and unadventurous. Another reason for this was probably that on his tours he could not guarantee finding a good orchestra; in fact on occasions even the relatively undemanding nature of these orchestral parts was too much for local amateurs.* Thus it was largely for pragmatic reasons that Spohr reduced the importance of the accompaniments in his violin concerti and string quartets, but despite their designedly secondary roles the accompaniments often presented unfamiliar difficulties to contemporary players because of their chromaticism, which became even more pronounced in his later works.

Spohr's approach to other types of instrumental works was different. The seven string quintets, for instance, are not simply thicker-textured versions of the string quartets. The extra viola seems to have freed him to give the lower instruments more independent and interesting parts, for whereas in the quartets his predilection for full harmonies constrained him to have all the instruments playing almost all the time, in the quintets, despite the continuing prominence of the first violin, there is far more interplay and variety of texture. This is even more so in the String Sextet op.140, a very unjustly neglected work of real quality. Here the thematic material is generally well-

* /For examples see LSA i, 234-67

distributed and the first viola, in particular, is frequently given prominent passages of dialogue with the first violin, though the second viola and second 'cello have rather less interest than the other parts. In the four double quartets a similar procedure is followed, with the members of the first quartet being treated almost as a concertino and the second quartet as a ripieno. Examples of his use of this approach on a larger scale can be found in the Seventh Symphony, for double orchestra, where a small orchestra of eleven solo players is contrasted with a normal sized orchestra, and in the Quartet Concerto, op.131. At the other end of the scale from the double quartets are the 14 duos for two violins and the duo op.13 for violin and viola. In these the parts are equally matched and the whole set constitutes an unrivalled exploration of the resources of the medium. In all these compositions where attention is not centred on a single performer, not only is the handling of forces more satisfactory than in the quartets, but also in the majority of cases the novelty of the combination seems to have stimulated Spohr's imagination to produce fresher musical ideas. This is borne out by the fact that in his chamber music the earliest works in a new medium are generally more successful than the later ones.

In all the string chamber music (except the duos) there is an inevitable tendency for the first violin to play a leading role, but in mixed ensembles this need not necessarily apply. The tradition of the violin sonata as practiced by Haydn and Mozart, was of a piano sonata with violin accompaniment, and the same was true of many piano trios of the period (though Mozart had moved towards a more equal partnership in the violin sonata in B flat K.454 and in some of the late trios). The violin virtuoso tradition on the other hand, and that deriving from the sonata with figured bass, gave the violin the dominant role. Spohr adopted from the start a position which differed from both of these; in him the egotism of the virtuoso stopped short of an unwillingness to share the limelight. His inclination towards concertante combinations can be seen in his earliest works, the op.3 duos (1803), and his

marriage to a brilliant harpist in 1806 provided the impetus to compose concertante works for his wife and himself to perform on tour. In all he wrote six sonatas, a Rondo and a Fantaisie for the two instruments alone, two concertante with orchestra and a trio with cello. In these works solo and accompanying roles are alternated and the technical resources of both instruments are fully exploited without the music becoming merely a meritricious display of agility. From 1816 he turned towards works for violin with piano, for his wife was also an accomplished pianist and her fragile constitution had made playing the harp difficult. He composed no sonatas for violin and piano until after her death, but between 1816 and 1821 he wrote three Pot-Pourris (subtitled 'pour Violon et Pianoforte concertants') an Introduction and Rondo op.46 and a Grand Rondo op.51 to perform with her.

This sort of composition in which two or more instruments vied in virtuosity seems to have attracted him strongly. Thus in 1836-7 he composed three Duos Concertants (Sonatas) for violin and piano opp.95,95 & 112, and between 1840 and 1849 the five 'Trios Concertants' for piano, violin and 'cello. In these remarkable trios all three instruments have brilliant and difficult parts, requiring performers of great technical assurance; it is no surprise that among the few people to perform them in the later part of the nineteenth century were Hallé, Joachim and Piatti. In the trios Spohr successfully solved the problem of balance between the three instruments because he gave each of them a fair share of prominence; the Piano Quintet op.130 was less successful since, as in the string quartets, the second violin, viola and 'cello are generally confined to accompanying roles. The Piano Quintet with wind op.53, however, is a fine work in which the skilfully written wind parts act as a perfect foil to the showy piano writing. In a different category from these works are the three sets of Salonstücke opp.127,135 and 145. They are for violin and piano but are in an altogether lighter vein than the Duos Concertants and less virtuoso than the pot-pourris. The first set was subtitled Lieder ohne Worte, and they are short character pieces in which the piano plays an unequivocally accompanying part and the violin parts, though difficult, are on a much more human scale. They are, on the whole,

disappointing, for Spohr's ideas lack the character to be successful in minature forms.

Apart from these chamber works Spohr also composed three pieces for wind and strings; the Nonet op.31, the Octet op.32 and the Septet op.147. The first two, written in Vienna in 1813 and 1814 are full of passages of concertante writing for all the instruments and the horn parts in the Octet must be among the most difficult examples of hand-horn writing in the repertoire. The Septet (1850), however, is less extrovert. Here the piano does not dominate as it does in the op.52 quintet, nor are any of the other parts as obtrusively virtuoso as they are in the Nonet and Octet.
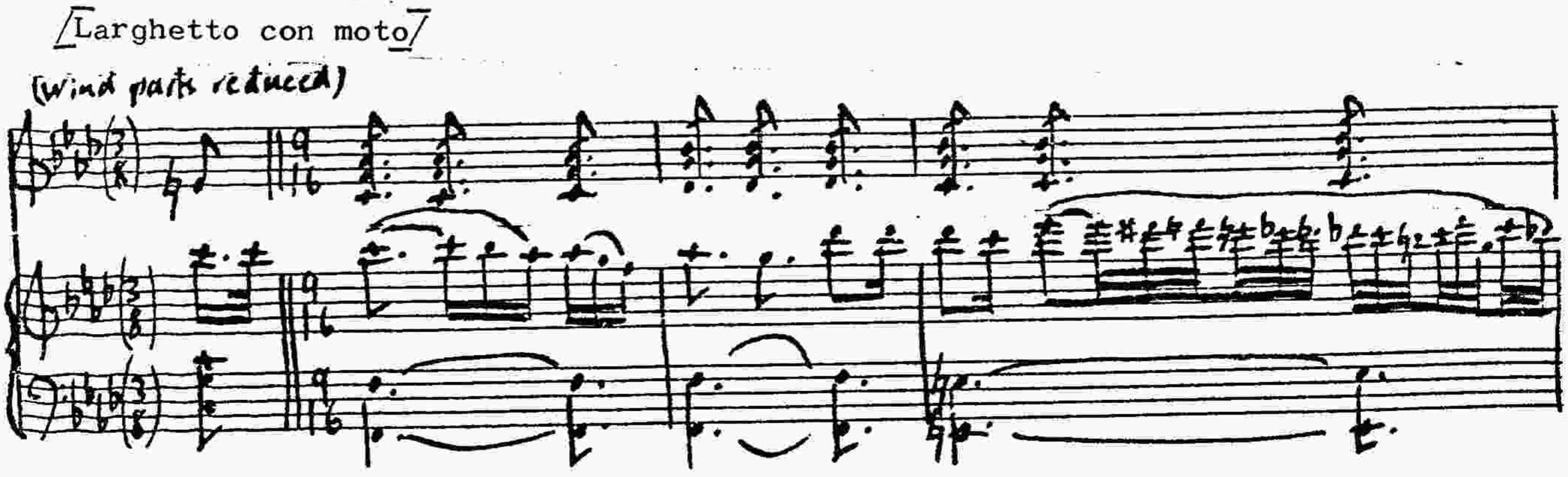
One consequence of the formative influence of the violin and of Spohr's liking for a concertante style was that he had a tendency to transfer violin figurations to other instruments. This can be seen in the clarinet concerti and especially in his piano writing where characteristic violin patterns are often used with only the slightest concessions to the conformation of the hand. Chopin played the op.52 quintet in Warsaw in 1830 and remarked that it was

> most beautiful, but badly written for the piano. Everything he tried to write expressly for piano display is intolerably difficult and it is impossible to find the fingering.[41]
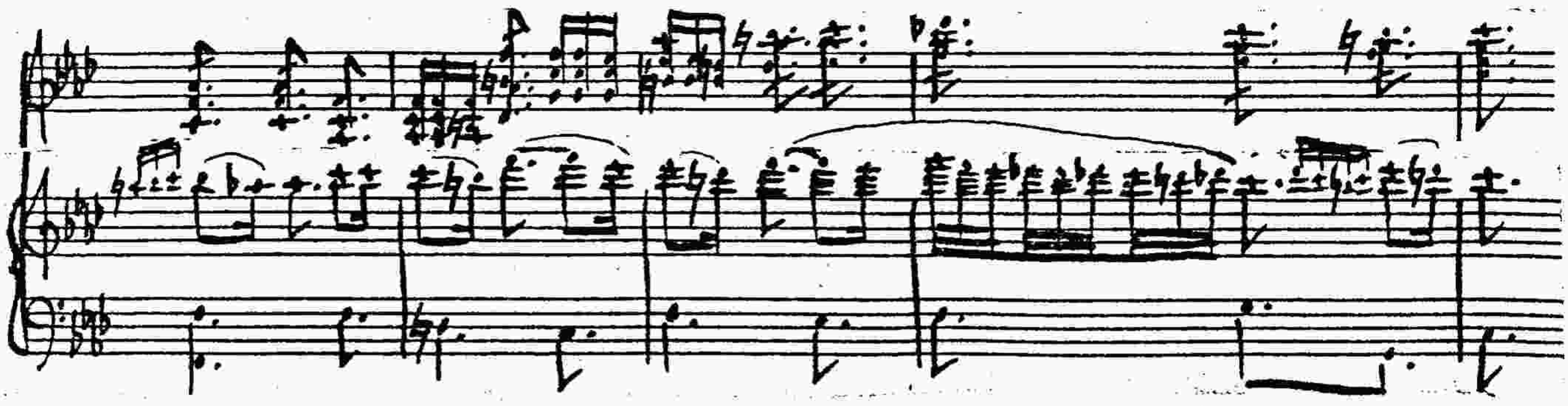
Nevertheless the influence of his piano style on other composers cannot be ignored. Particularly in slow movements, where he used similar techniques of ornamenting a cantabile as in the violin concerti, he created an idiom which finds echoes in Chopin's own music, as the following extract indicates.

Ex. 20 Quintet op.52

/Larghetto con moto/



Ex. 20 cont...



In his handling of the orchestra Spohr was a master, but his personality led him deliberately to restrict the range of his resources, and just as in his violin playing he denied himself the use of certain piquant bowings, artificial harmonics etc., so in his orchestral writing he did not seek to create startling new effects but rather to achieve a rich sonority which matched his luxuriant chromaticism; this he did with absolute assurance. Examples of the sorts of miscalculation which beset Schumann's orchestration or the crudities which occasionally disfigure Beethoven's can be searched for in vain in Spohr. His experience of playing in and directing orchestras had taught him the capacities of every instrument and its effect in combination. If his orchestral writing has any fault it is that the opulence of sound which he knew so well how to create is almost perpetually employed, depriving the music of necessary contrast.

As was earlier observed, the violin concerti generally show the orchestra in a subordinate role. The forces he used in these works were variable, ranging from 2 flutes, 2 horns, 2 bassoons and strings in No. 1 to a full double wind section with 3 trombones, timpani and strings in No. 9. In the later concerti, particularly nos. 7 & 9, the orchestra plays a more important part, but there is no doubt that insofar as the concerti were intended to display his own prowess as a violinist he was well aware that the majority of listeners were more impressed by the brilliant execution of the virtuoso than by the merits of the composition.[42] Where his own virtuoso display was not the prime motivation for the work and it was principally his reputation

as a composer that was at stake, he showed at an early stage that he was quite capable of handling the orchestra sensitively and imaginatively in the concerto. This can be seen in the Concertante for two violins op.48 of 1808. Here the wind instruments are more freely used and the orchestral balance of the opening tutti is admirably calculated; in the slow movement the use of a trio for two soli 'celli and bass at the opening and a pizzicato bass line later in the movement are highly effective contrasts to the rich four-part writing for the solo violins. A similar freedom is seen in the First Clarinet Concerto of the same year. The solo part, though far from lacking in brilliance, is more often engaged in dialogue with the wind instruments of the orchestra than is usual in the violin concerti. In fact much of the scoring is so clear that it has the effect of chamber music and the delicately wistful piano ending to the last movement with its high 'cello line is as effective as it is unexpected.

The Second Clarinet Concerto of 1810 uses a larger orchestra than the First with even more freedom, with the soloist alternating between passages of display and democratic interplay with the orchestra. The solo enters a few bars from the beginning of the first movement in a short passage which is so integrated with the orchestra that it could be taken as part of the wind section and after a few bars the expected tutti exposition proceeds. In the slow movement the horns are very expressively used and important imitative dialogues with the soloist are given successively to bassoon and flute. The last movement opens strikingly with a vigorous motive on the two timpani which recurs at various points in the movement and unusual pizzicato effects are employed in the violins. This work shows a mastery of orchestral resources which is amply confirmed by the First Symphony of the following year, of which the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung observed:

> Both in invention and elaboration, we consider it not only to surpass all that we know of the orchestral music of this master, but confess also, that for many years we have scarcely heard a new work of this kind, which possesses so much novelty and originality without

> singularity and affectation; so much richness and science without artifice and bombast. We may therefore confidently predict that when published it will become a favourite piece with every great and skilled orchestra, and with all serious and cultivated audiences; but it requires both.[43]

It may be noted in passing how similar the final comment is to early English reactions to the work.

Spohr's orchestration elicited much praise from contemporaries. In a conversation recorded in C.H.H. Parry's diary on 6 January 1866, S.S. Wesley expressed his opinion that both Spohr and Beethoven were less adept at counterpoint than Mendelssohn, but affirmed his belief that Spohr was a greater master of orchestration than the latter. Parry wrote:

> Dr. Wesley (and Mrs.) came to dinner tonight. We got some very interesting information out of him. He said that he thought that the reason why Beethoven and more especially Spohr were sometimes (frequently) so unsatisfactory was because they lacked the necessary and beneficial basis of hard work at counterpoint; and he said that he considered that the reason why Mendelssohn so excelled was entirely because he had that instruction, and went through that preparation thoroughly. I had a short talk with him over the full score of the Hymn of Praise. He told me that the reason why Spohr so excelled was because he could bring such a marvellous tone out of his orchestra. Mendelssohn could not be sure of it.[44]

Even Chorley excepted this aspect from his general criticism of Spohr's music, and referring to Faust remarked:

> His knowledge of instrumental combination is consummate, and regulated by a just taste. His orchestral treatment of his subjects is, indeed, so rich and charming, that the ear sometimes follows the sweet and intricate dialogue of pipe and wire, charmed into forgetfulness of the fact that it is but an accessory to the human voice.[45]

Spohr did not set out, as Berlioz did, to create startling new effects; his strength lay in the subtle combination and blending of sounds. But that is not to say that his orchestral writing could not be thoroughly extrovert when he required it to be; few pieces of orchestral writing from the 1830's could be more exhilarating than the march from the Fourth Symphony. It uses a standard orchestra with piccolo, four horns, three trombones and the addition of 'turkish' percussion, with perfect judgement. Other features in the same work, such as the scoring of the extended birdsong section in the first movement,

in which a 'flauto terzo' in E flat is used, are equally imaginative. But more significant than any individual feature is the consistent sensitivity with which Spohr used his orchestral palette; the aptness of the 'cello solo in the second movement, the doubling of flutes, oboes, horns and trumpets for the chorale in the 'Song of Thanksgiving' and the use of clarinets in their chalumeau register doubled with 'celli and accompanied by pizzicato strings for the funeral chorale in the following movement, are all examples of this. And in general his selectiveness is shown by the choice of slightly different forces for the movements of the symphony. Thus the omission of the distinctively toned oboes in the slow movement is a charming touch, giving the sound a mellowness of whose cause the listener is probably not consciously aware.

Perhaps one of the most conspicuous external characteristics of Spohr's music, however, is his experiments in form. His early violin concerti are formally indebted to Mozart and Rode but nevertheless contain interesting individual elements. The allegro moderato first movement of the Second Concerto for instance, is irregular; a march-like theme at the beginning of the orchestral exposition is replaced in the solo exposition by a declamatory theme which may be a conscious derivative (much altered) of the original theme. The same type of opening to the solo exposition is also used in the Ninth Concerto. In the second movement of the Sixth Concerto (1809) he employed an instrumental recitative, adapting the device to the violin in a distinctively personal way. This movement which is marked Recit. andante - Allegro molto - Adagio - Recit. andante, clearly foreshadows his use of recitative in the much more famous 'Gesangsszena' concerto (no. 8) and it occurs again in the first movement of the Twelfth Concerto op.79. It is almost certainly from Spohr that later nineteenth-century composers of violin concerti derived the device.

From quite early in his career, therefore, it is apparent that Spohr was not content simply to work within established forms. Certainly not all the unusual features in his works can claim to be absolutely original, but he was undoubtedly in the vanguard of such experimentation and this tendency is

an important characteristic of his style. The Eighth Concerto (1816) is unlike anything else from the period and indicates how early Spohr was involved in the search for freer forms which was an essential element of Romantic expression. After the Eleventh Concerto of 1826 he wrote no more full-scale violin concerti. The next work he wrote for violin and orchestra, op.79, was entitled 'Concertino', and in this composition the three movements are linked; the first movement entirely abandons sonata form, the second movement, Larghetto, has frequent changes of time (bar 1, 12/8; bar 5,9/8; bar 24, 6/8; bar 30, 9/8; bar42, 6/8; bar 48, 9/8; bar 50, 3/8), the last change serving as the basis for a link into the Alla Polacca last movement.

Other unusual movement forms, of which the following are a few examples, occur with increasing frequency in Spohr's later works. In the Quartet op.58 no. 2, for instance, the second of its three movements, an andante set of irregular variations in 4/4, incorporates as the third variation a scherzo transformation of the theme in 3/4 before returning to an extended final andante variation. In the Third Symphony of 1828 a substantial slow introduction (4/4) to the first movement reappears in a modified form, notated in the time of the allegro (6/8), in place of a development section. In the String Sextet op.140 the Scherzo and Trio lead straight into the Finale, recur instead of a development and appear again in epigramatic form at the point where the coda is expected, only to be abruptly dismissed by the re-appearance of the main theme of the Finale, played prestissimo, to conclude the movement. His search for novelty even extended to the Lied, and in 1848 he wrote <u>An Sie am Klavier</u>, a setting of Braun von Braunthal's text 'Pulse, höret auf zu schlagen' as a 'Sonatine für Pianoforte mit Gesang'.

Some of his most interesting experiments can be found in the operas. As early as 1813, in <u>Faust</u>, this can be observed in the opening scene. The overture, which begins in C major and after a slow fugal middle section concludes in C minor(foreshadowing the inexorability of the tragic action to follow), leads straight into offstage dance music coming from a lighted theatre

at the back of the stage. Faust emerges from the theatre on to the darkened front of the stage, which represents the town square, and soliloquises morosely in recitative while the dance music continues. He is shortly joined by Mefistopheles and the music gradually merges into recitative and duet. The whole of this opening section of the opera can clearly be seen to anticipate the continuous action of his later operas. This is already highly developed in Jessonda (1822) and Der Berggeist (1824) and is taken to a logical conclusion in Die Kreutzfahrer (1844), which is a fully-fledged music drama with no break in the action and no superfluous repetition of text or even melismas in the music.

From the time of the Fourth Symphony, Die Weihe der Töne (1832) Spohr returned to the idea of programme music at regular intervals, and in every case the adoption of a programme modified the form of the work to some extent. Three more of the symphonies were given programmatic titles, the Historische Symphonie (no. 6), Irdisches und Göttlisches im Menschenleben (no. 7), and Die Jahrzeiten (no. 9) and the Duo Concertant for violin and piano op.96 was entitled 'Souvenir d'un Voyage a Dresde et dans la Suisse saxonne'.

It has been suggested that Spohr's excursions into the realm of programme music, his other formal experiments and his interest in unusual instrumental combinations were all part of an attempt to compensate for the stereotype nature of his harmonic, rhythmic and melodic idiom. Schumann, for instance, was induced by the appearance of the Fourth Symphony to remark:

> If any composer ever differed from another, if anyone ever remained true to himself from the first tone on, it is Spohr, with his fine immortal lament. But as he looks at everything as though through tears his figures run into each other like formless, ethereal shapes, for which we can scarcely find a name. It is a continuous resonance certainly, held together by the hand and mind of an artist - we all know that.. Jessonda seems the very growth of his own heart. Yet after this he remained the same in his instrumental works; his Third Symphony possesses but an outward difference from his first. He felt that he must dare to take a new step.[46]

It should be observed, however, that all Spohr's experiments can equally be

seen as a response to current Romantic trends and that in many instances he anticipated other German composers' experiments in similar areas by several years. But, as Naumann maintained, the distinguishing characteristic of the 'epoch of the great German talents' was manner rather than style, and so it might just as fairly be said of Spohr's younger contemporaries, as of Spohr, that they had sought out new forms in an attempt to escape the consequences of mannerist musical idioms.

Nevertheless, Spohr's music stops short of the intensity of Romantic feeling and overt emotionalism which can be found in the music of Schumann, Liszt and Wagner because, as Schumann highlighted in his 'masked ball' analogy, under all the disguises Spohr was really employing essentially the same old procedures. Hauptmann had put his finger on an important point when he observed of Spohr in 1831:

> Music with him must, before all things, take definite shape; i.e. it must be connected; the term passionate may be ever on his lips as a favourite catch-word, but the good sense of this creative artist enables him, perhaps instinctively, to see that mere passion has not in itself a shred of aesthetic interest.[47]

Hauptmann's own resistance to contemporary Romantic trends comes out clearly in this observation, but in the wake of Spohr's excursions into programme music after Die Weihe der Töne in 1832 even he seems to have become somewhat cynical about Spohr's perennial preoccupations, for he wrote in 1856:

> He is just as keen about music and he never changes his opinions, it is the same old, old story, 'perfection of form,' 'interesting harmonic progressions,' etc.[48]

The concern with symmetry, the subordination of expressive to aesthetic considerations and the general rigidity of his artistic creed are important aspects of Spohr's style, and Hauptmann's reaction to the concertino Sonst und Jetzt in 1839 is succinctly revealing. He remarked:

> Such thorough workmanship is to be found in the concertos of Spohr alone; you go from point to point in it as if you were travelling by rail.[49]

Hauptmann and many others of Spohr's contemporaries may have found this aspect satisfying for a time, but in the long term the combination of Spohr's

concentrated, unremitting chromaticism with his fidelity to concisely organised rhythmic, melodic and tonal structures, proved unsatisfying to the rising generation. The external features of Spohr's compositions and his experiments in programme music, by themselves suggest a greater measure of freedom in his music than is found to be the case. To extend the analogy of a writer in The Musical World, it may be said that Spohr is like a man walking up and down a very small room habited in a straight-waistcoat and fantasising from time to time that he is Napoleon or Alexander the Great; but the onlooker is not deceived by his protestations into believing him to be anything other than he seems. The analogy is not altogether fair, for much of his music is far finer than might be inferred from such a severe characterisation, but it does encapsulate a point of view that became increasingly prevalent as the nineteenth century progressed and provides an important key to the paradox of his widespread influence followed by a precipitous decline in his popularity. The significant point is that Spohr had developed a technical means of expression in his chromaticism which inspired his contemporaries but which, on the whole, he himself failed to exploit convincingly because he was a prisoner of antipathetical aesthetic ideals. This will be clarified if his harmonic, rhythmic, melodic and tonal procedures are now examined.

Spohr's chromaticism, however much it may have owed its inception to the inspiration provided by Cherubini, Haydn and Mozart, differs from theirs in one vitally important respect; that is, its excess. The extent of this can easily be demonstrated by analysis of any of Spohr's later works. The propensity manifested itself early but became more pronounced as he grew older. If, as an example of his mature style, the first movement of the String Sextet op.140 is examined, it will be found that the exposition section alone, consisting of 86 bars of 4/4, contains 74 chromatic harmonies.* Of

* Chromatic harmony is here taken to mean any chromatic alteration which has clear harmonic implications.

these many are the result of melodic chromaticism of the Mozartian type, especially the upward resolving chromatic appoggiatura which, however, unlike Mozart, is treated in a large number of cases so as to produce a diminished chord, of which there are 25 in the exposition. Other examples chosen at random, may be cited to confirm the picture. The exposition section of the first movement of the String Quartet op.82 no. 2 has 49 chromatic harmonies in 93 bars of 6/8; there are 20 diminished chords. The exposition of the first movement of the Piano Sonata op.125 has 53 chromatic harmonies in 84 bars of 3/4; there are 37 diminished chords.
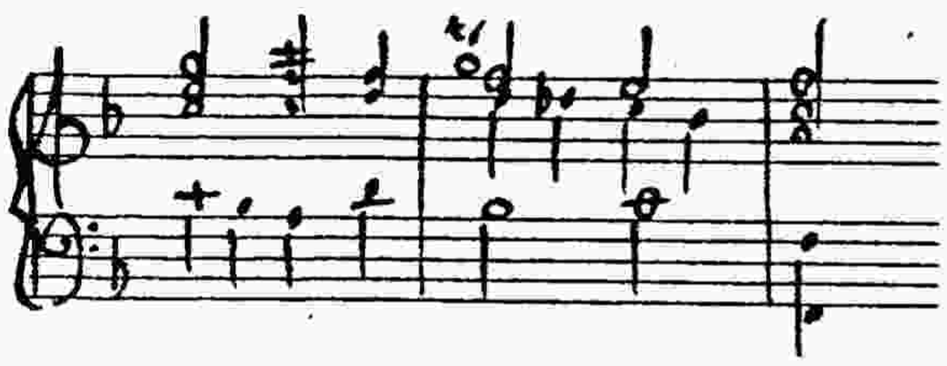
Comparison with music by other composers is revealing. Mozart's String Quartet K.458, for instance, has an exposition of 83 bars in the first movement containing 17 chromatic harmonies, including six diminished chords. K.428 has 22 chromatic harmonies in the 63 bars of the first movement exposition, with only four diminished chords. K.387 has 25 chromatic harmonies in the 55 bars of the exposition of the first movement with 12 diminished chords, this movement in particular has many features in its handling of chromaticism which are to be found in Spohr. Beethoven's different approach can be seen already in the op.18 quartets. Here the chromatic harmonies are produced not so much by the natural flow of parts or as a result of melodic chromatic appoggiaturas, but occur as obtrusive harmonic gestures; thus, though the first movement exposition of op.18 no. 1 contains 21 chromatic harmonies in 114 bars, of these 14 are diminished chords, produced not in passing as is so often the case in Mozart and Spohr, but placed squarely on the strong beat. In the op.59 quartets the difference is even more apparent, for there the exposition of the first movement of op.59 no. 1 has only 12 chromatic harmonies in 98 bars and of these 7 are diminished chords.

The extent to which Spohr used chromaticism in his music has one important general effect, that is, the weakening of contrast, since, having dressed his themes out in luscious harmony the first time they appear there is little else he can do with them except repeat them with a new instrumentation. It is

undoubtedly an oversimplification to say that there can be little true development in his music because there is virtually nothing left to develop but the charge is not entirely unfounded. His chromaticism also meant that cadence assumed a disproportionate predominance in his work. His natural inclination led him to stress cadence at the end of a section, and he had a stock of formulae for doing so, just as other composers did, but Spohr's cadences are very frequently chromatic and this makes them so highly coloured that they can not act simply as punctuation; they inevitably have so much individuality of their own that their constant reappearance seems like perpetual self-quotation. The following are some of the most commonly used forms:
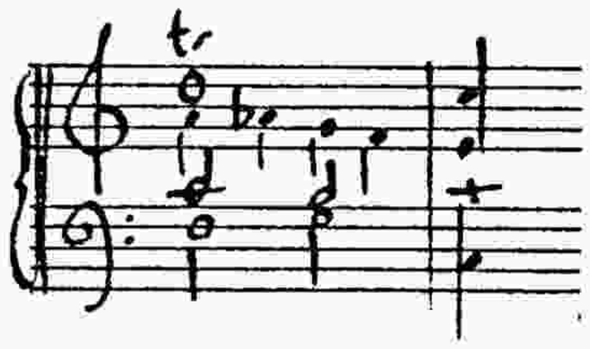
Ex. 21 a) Spohr, The Last Judgement, Overture

/Andante Grave/
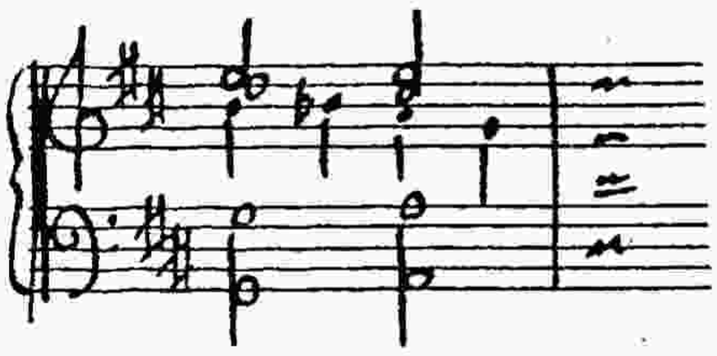


b) Calvary no. 11

/Allegro moderato/



c) The Fall of Babylon, no. 28

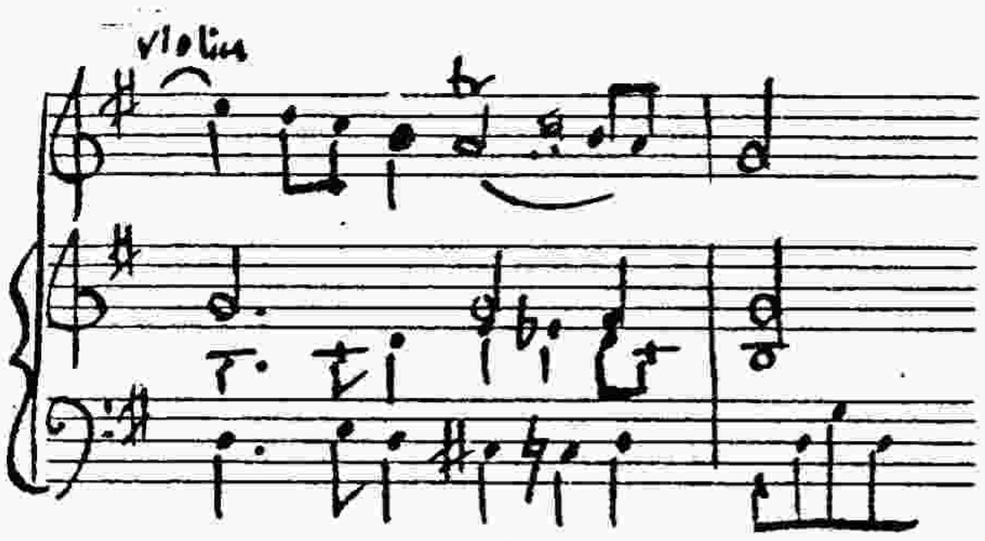
/Allegro moderato/



This cadence seems to have a religious connotation, appearing with predictable frequency in the oratorios and in such places as the closing bars of the third movement (Song of Thanksgiving) of the Fourth Symphony Die Weihe der Töne and in the final section of the third movement (the triumph of the Godly) in the Seventh Symphony Irdisches und Göttlisches im Menschenleben and, judging by its appearance in the first movement of the Historical Symphony, it seems that Spohr thought of it as having Baroque connotations. But it also appears, elsewhere, sometimes thinly disguised as in the following examples:
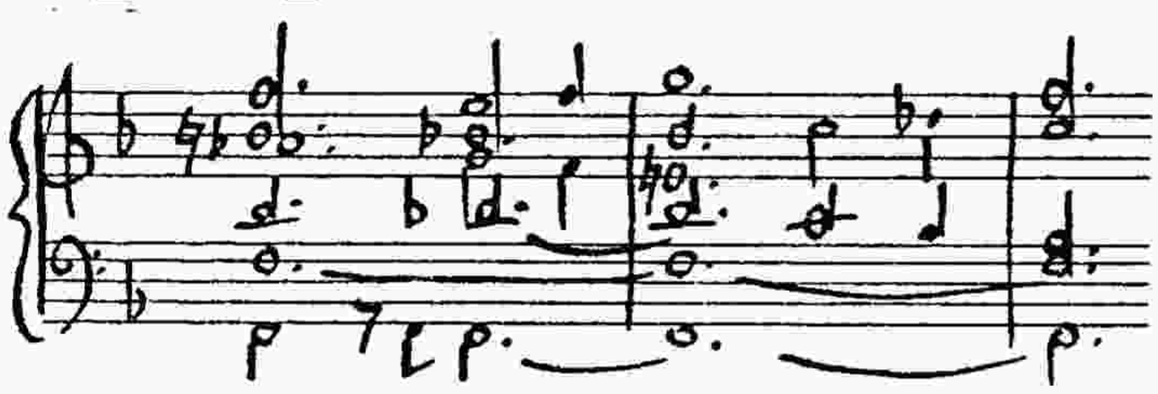
Ex. 22 a) Spohr, Piano Trio op.119

Allegro
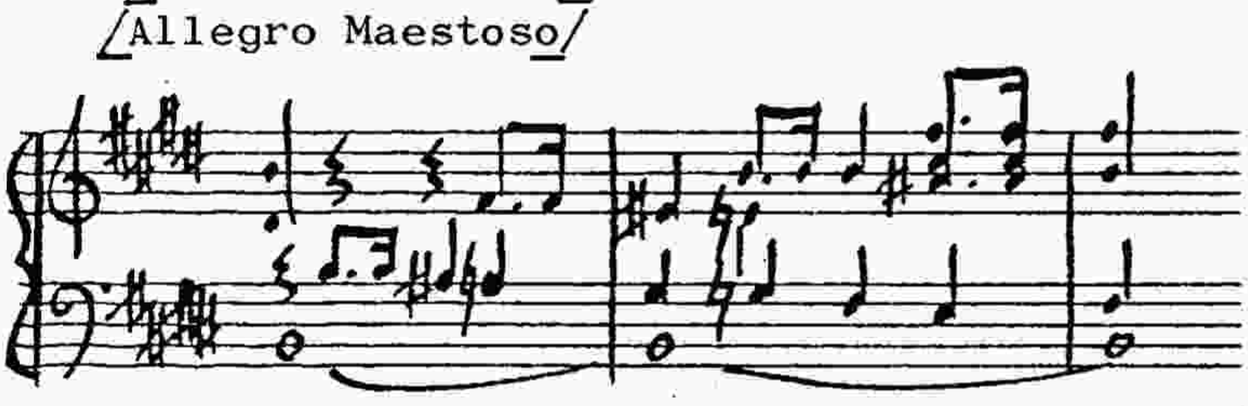


b) Symphony no. 2

Allegro



c) Faust no. 9
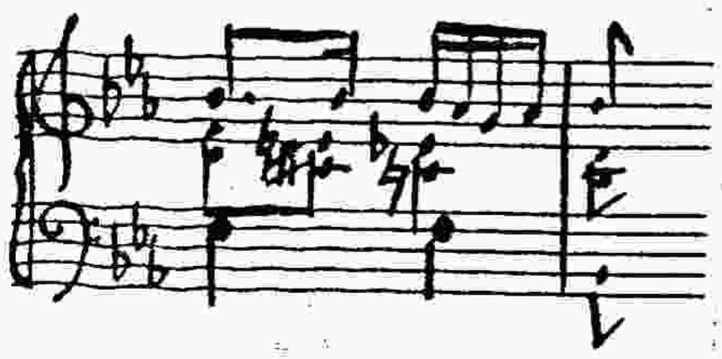
Allegro Maestoso



The chromaticism is often doubled in thirds or sixths, and another variant of the falling chromatic cadence which appears with even greater frequency is the one given below:

Ex. 23 a) Spohr, Sonata op.16

Adagio
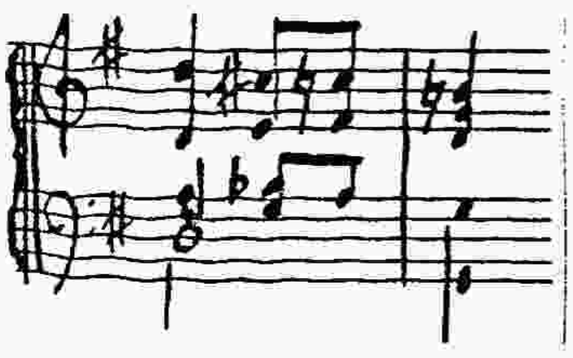


b) Faust no. 17

Andantino
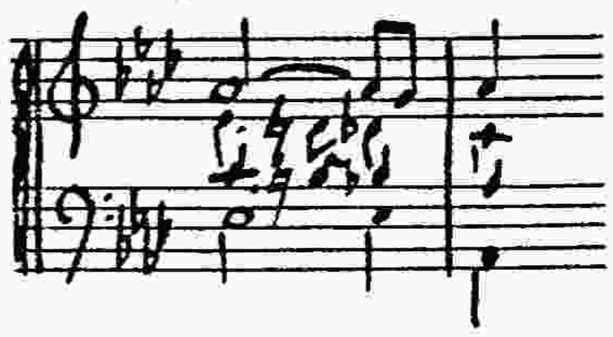


c) The Last Judgement no. 15

Larghetto
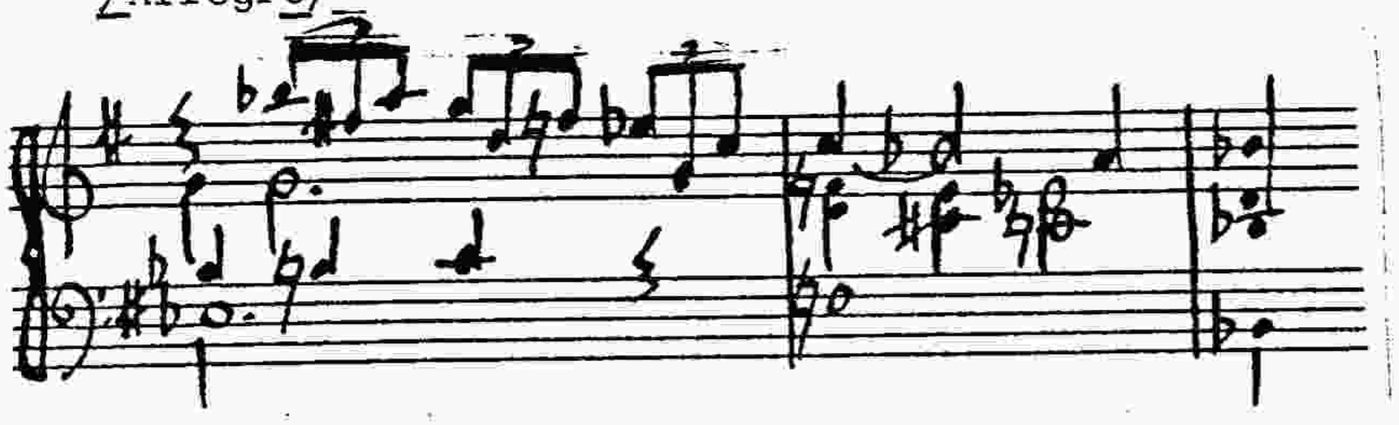


d) Calvary no. 1a

Larghetto



Ex. 23 e) Violin Concerto no. 7
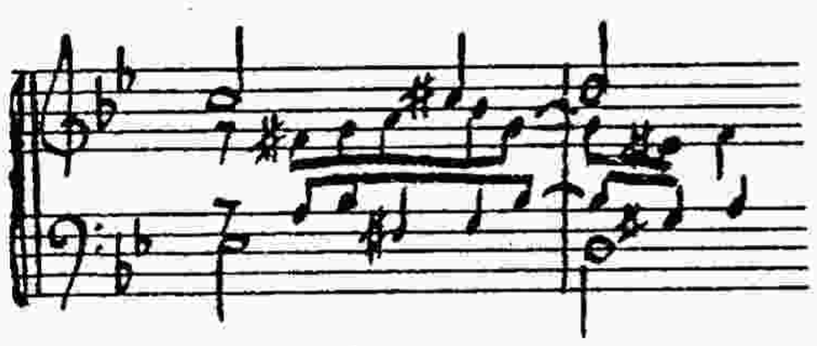
/Allegro/



Other characteristic forms are:

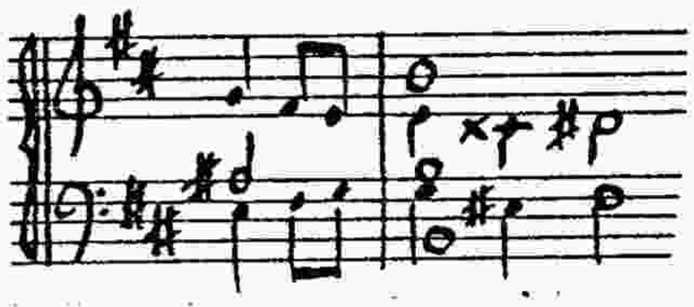
Ex. 24 a) Spohr, Faust no. 7

/Larghetto con moto/
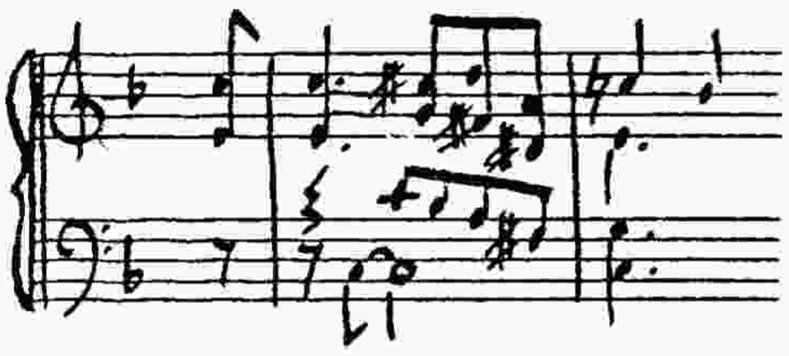


b) Calvary no. 13

/Largo/
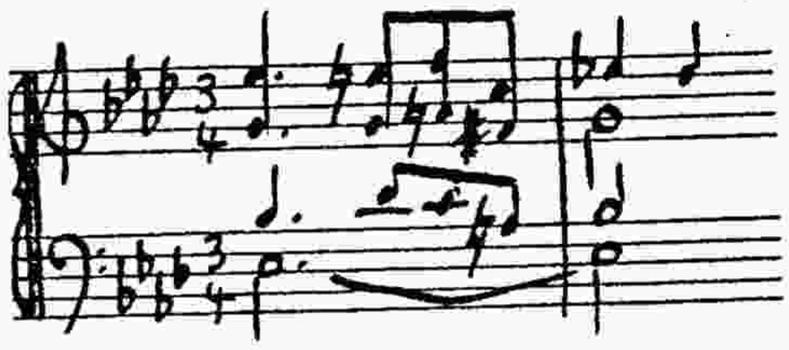


c) Lieder op.37, no. 4

/Schwermüthig/
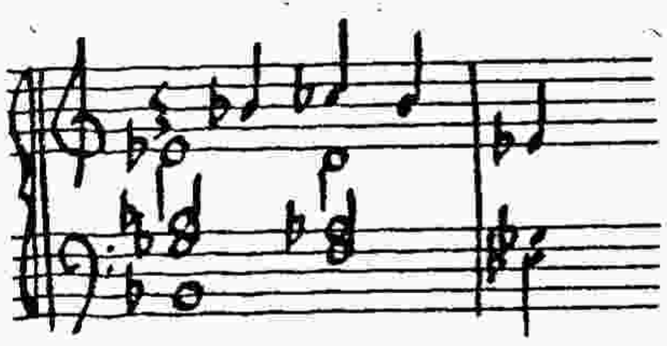


d) The Fall of Babylon, no. 3

Larghetto con moto
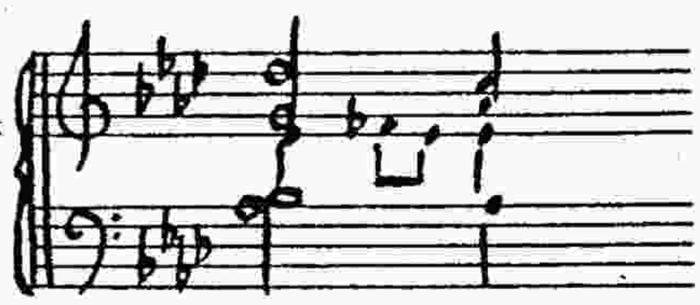


e) Faust, no. 6

/Andante/
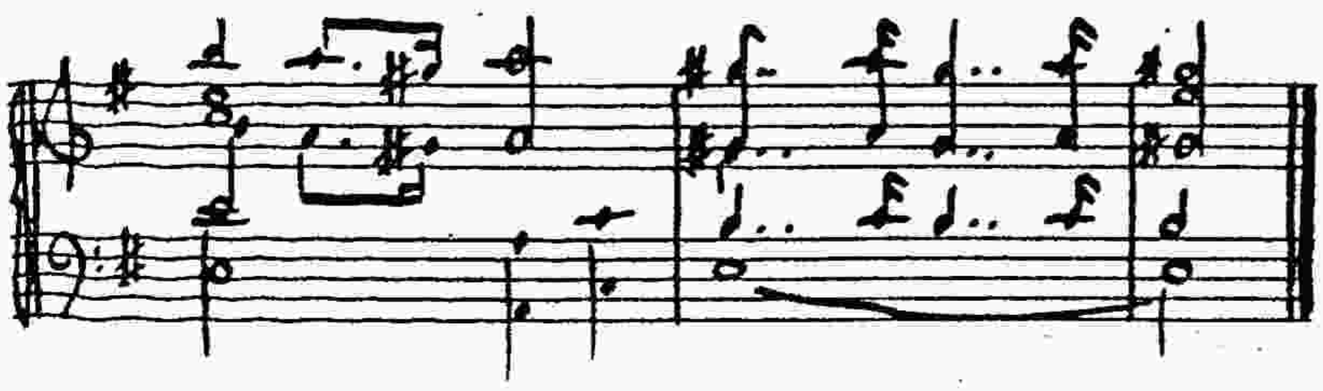


f) Overture Pietro von Abano

/Allegro/
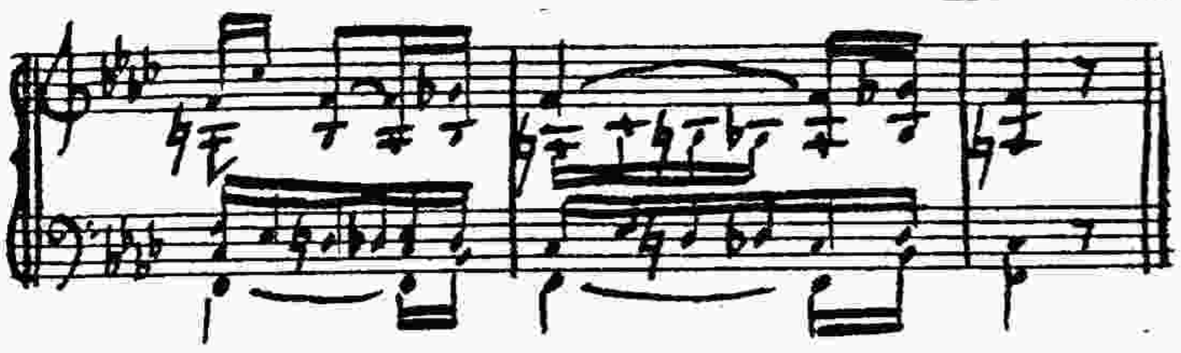


g) The Last Judgement no. 16

/Andante Grave/



Ex. 24 h) Piano Sonata op. 125

/Romanze/
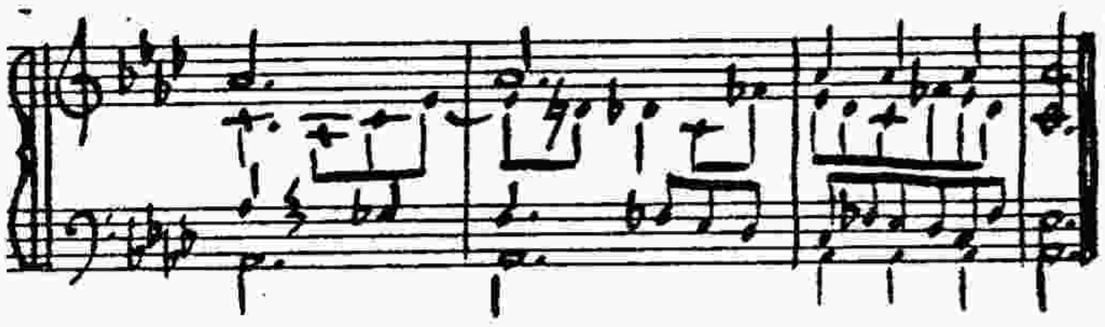


j) Calvary no. 1a

/Larghetto/

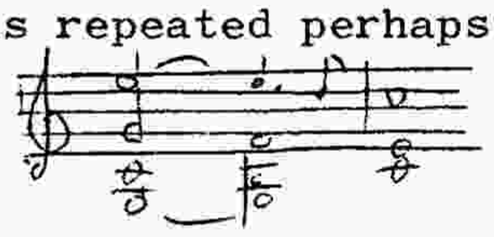


k) Ibid



The use of the flattened submediant can almost be regarded as a nervous tic in Spohr's music. Yet another favourite cadence, this time not chromatic, is a perfect cadence with a 7-6 suspension. Hauptman complained about its constant appearance in Des Heilands letzte Stunden, saying:
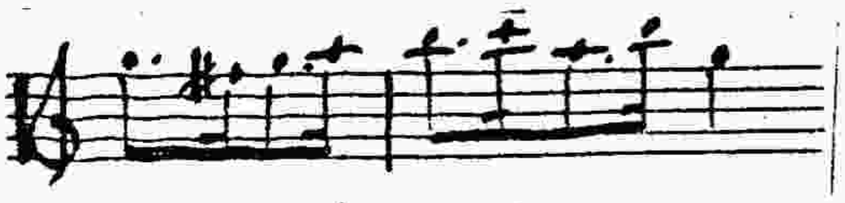
> It is a matter of surprise to me that Spohr should be able to write an oratorio that lasts three hours without a single new tone or harmonic progression... i.e. one that does not immediately suggest its author. It must be intentional, else I cannot conceive why we get that everlasting cadence of his repeated perhaps thirty times over.[50]



The same tendency to repeat himself is found in the structure of his melody too, and again it is usually because of the chromatic nature of his ideas that the listener is forcibly reminded of their former use, though another element which increases their stereotype effect is Spohr's predilection for certain trite rhythmic phrases. A good example of this is the following cadential figure which may be found with disconcerting regularity in his works:

Ex. 25 a) Spohr, The Fall of Babylon no. 7

/Allegro maestoso/
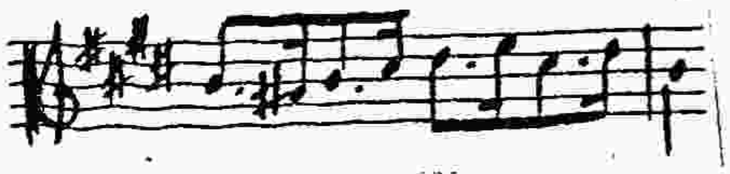


b) Faust no. 5

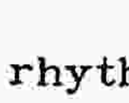
/Andante/



c) Faust no. 9
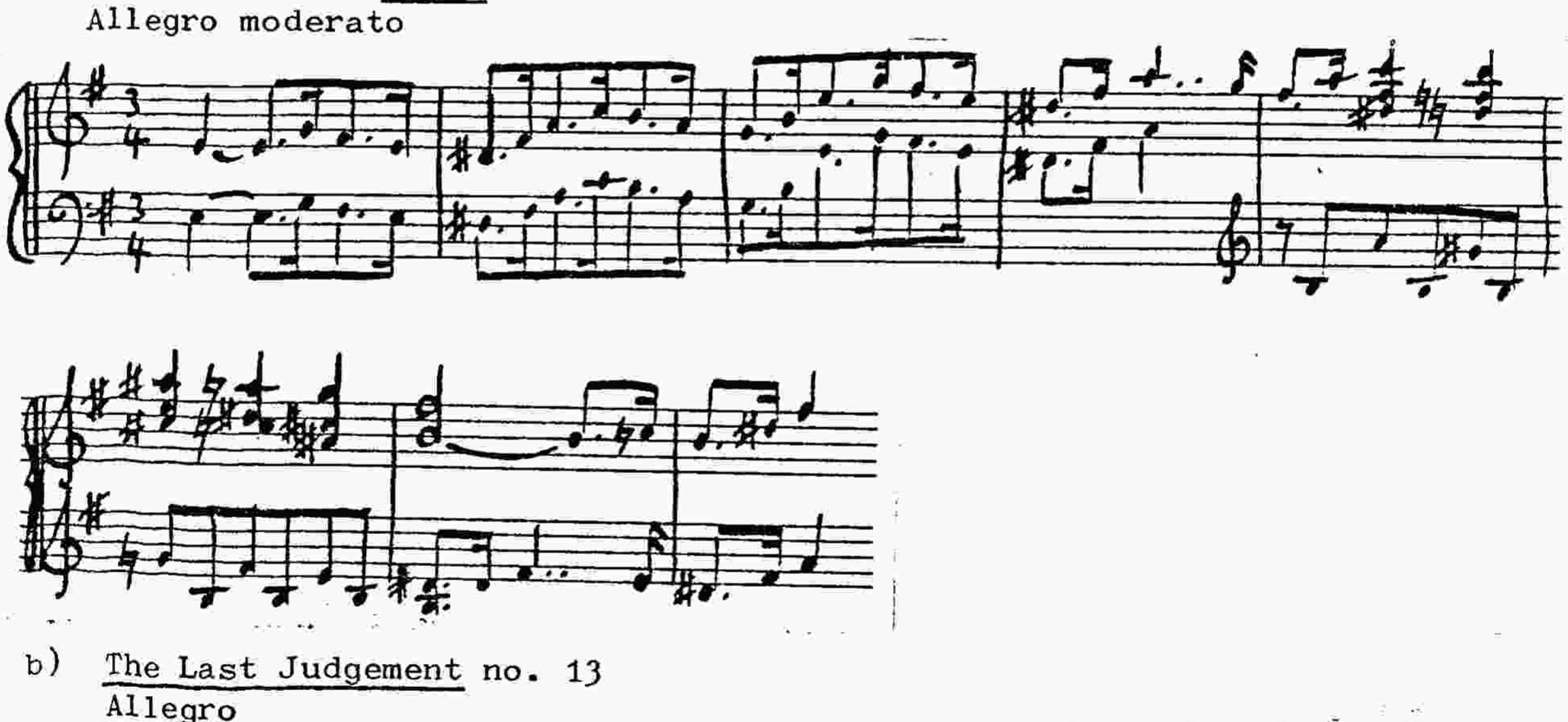
/Allegro/



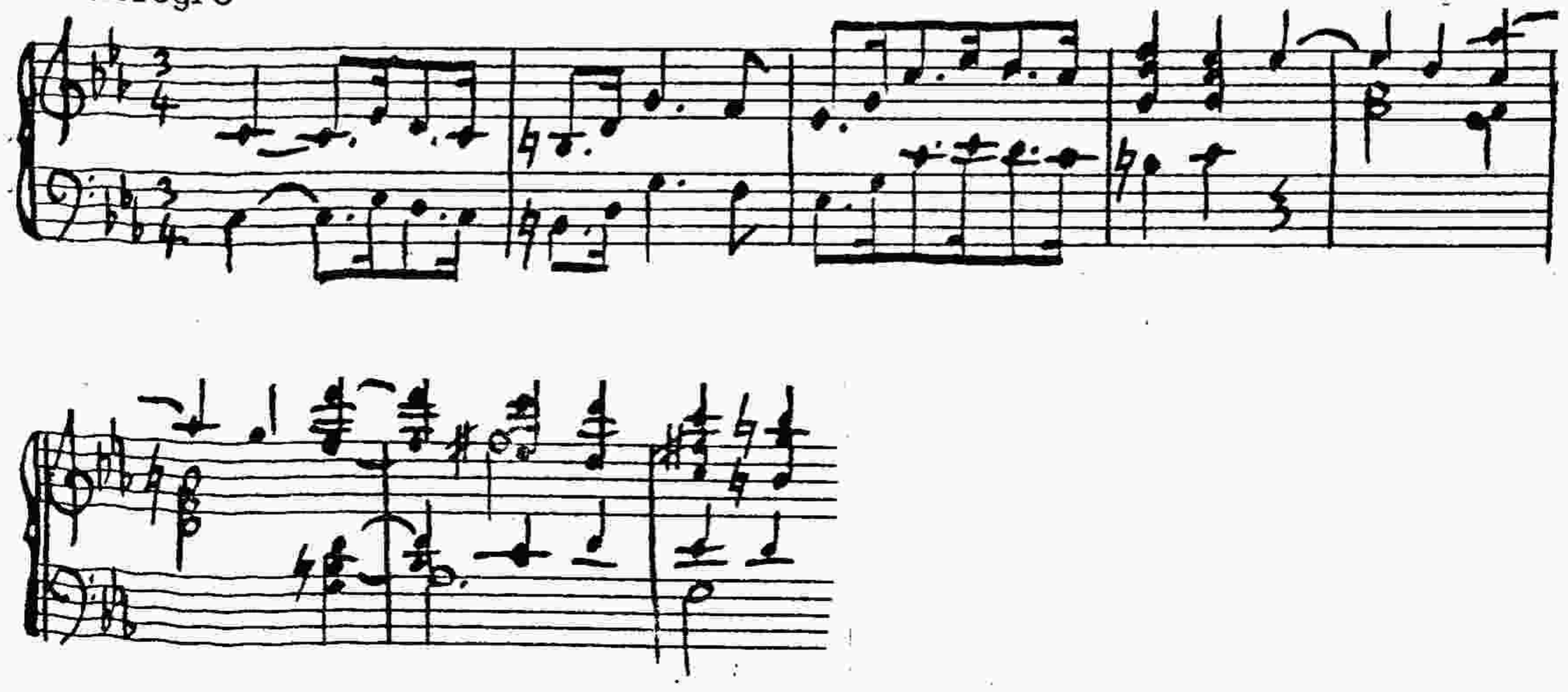
In fact, the prevalance of this sort of dotted figure is symptomatic of the rhythmic inflexibility which afflicts much of his music. As an example of its excessive use as a thematic element it may be noted that in the first violin part of the first movement (in 4/4) of the String Quartet op.82 no. 3 the rhythmic figure  , which opens the movement, occurs 67 times in 182 bars, and while the first violin does not have it one of the other instruments usually does.

It seems that Spohr was frequently content to accept the first idea which came into his head and was unaware that he was often saying the same thing in almost the same way. Examples of this can be found with ease, but a particularly good illustration is the opening of the third act of Faust compared with the opening of part two of The Last Judgement. Both of these orchestral introductions aim to create the same sort of mood, both prepare the listener for a final act of judgement and both use almost the same music to do so.

Ex. 26 a) Spohr, Faust no. 18
Allegro moderato
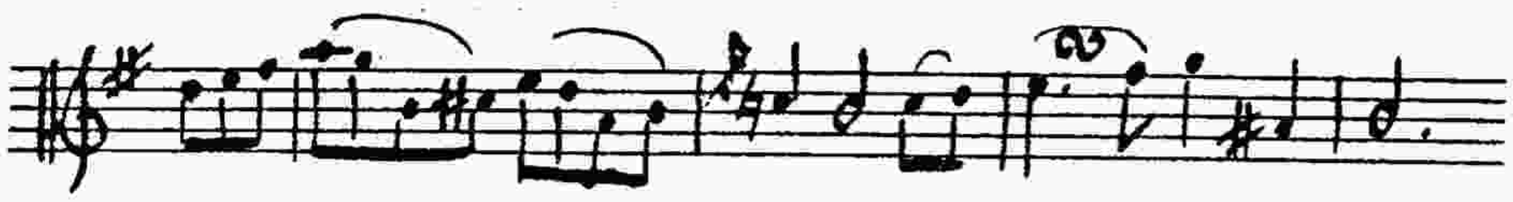


b) The Last Judgement no. 13
Allegro



The above passages are a glaring example of Spohr's tendency to self-plagiarism, but instances of the repetition of short melodic fragments can be found abundantly throughout his compositions. Many of these are derivatives of the standard violin figurations which he had inherited from Rode, but they are often chromatically enriched so that they become even more conspicuously familiar when re-encountered. The following are characteristic examples:
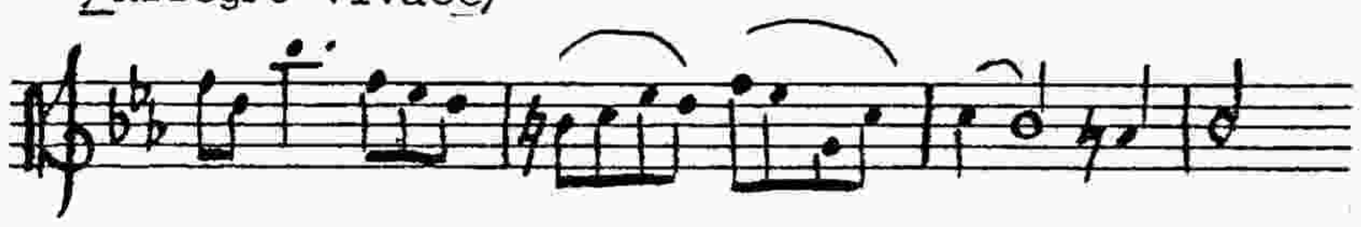
Ex. 27 a) Spohr, Sonata Concertante op.115

/Allegro/



b) Faust no. 17

/Allegro vivace/
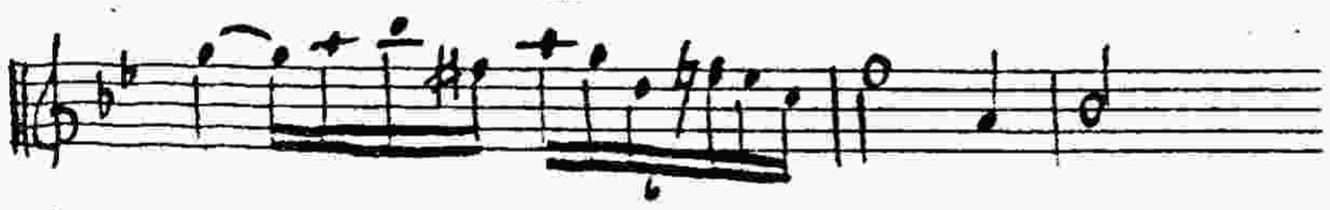


c) Faust no. 1

/Allegro/



d) Faust no. 7

/Larghetto con moto/



e) Violin Concerto no. 7

/Adagio/



f) Sonata Concertante op.115

/Allegro/
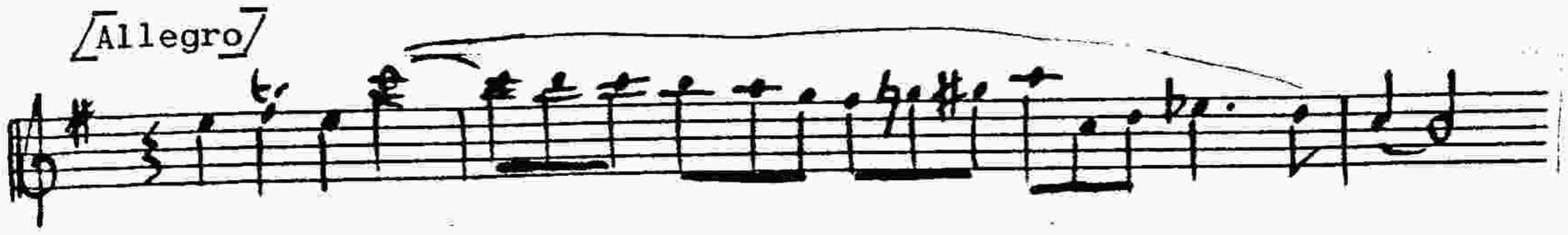


Ex. 28 a) Spohr, Piano Trio op.119
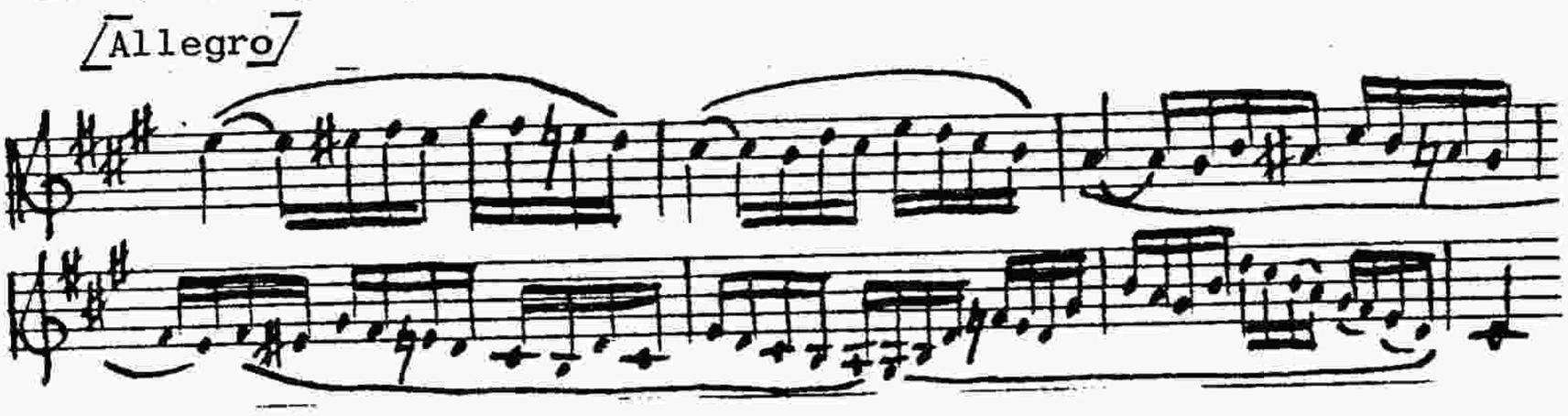
/Larghetto/
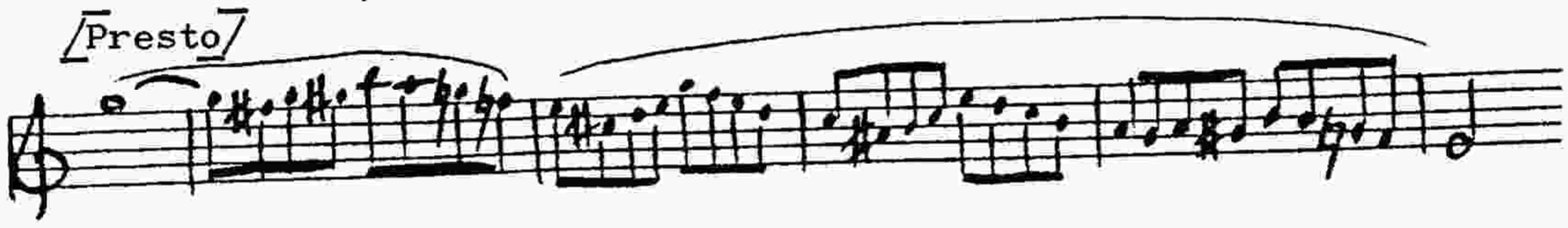


Ex. 28 b) String Quintet op. 129



Ex. 29 a) Spohr, String Quartet op.82 no. 3
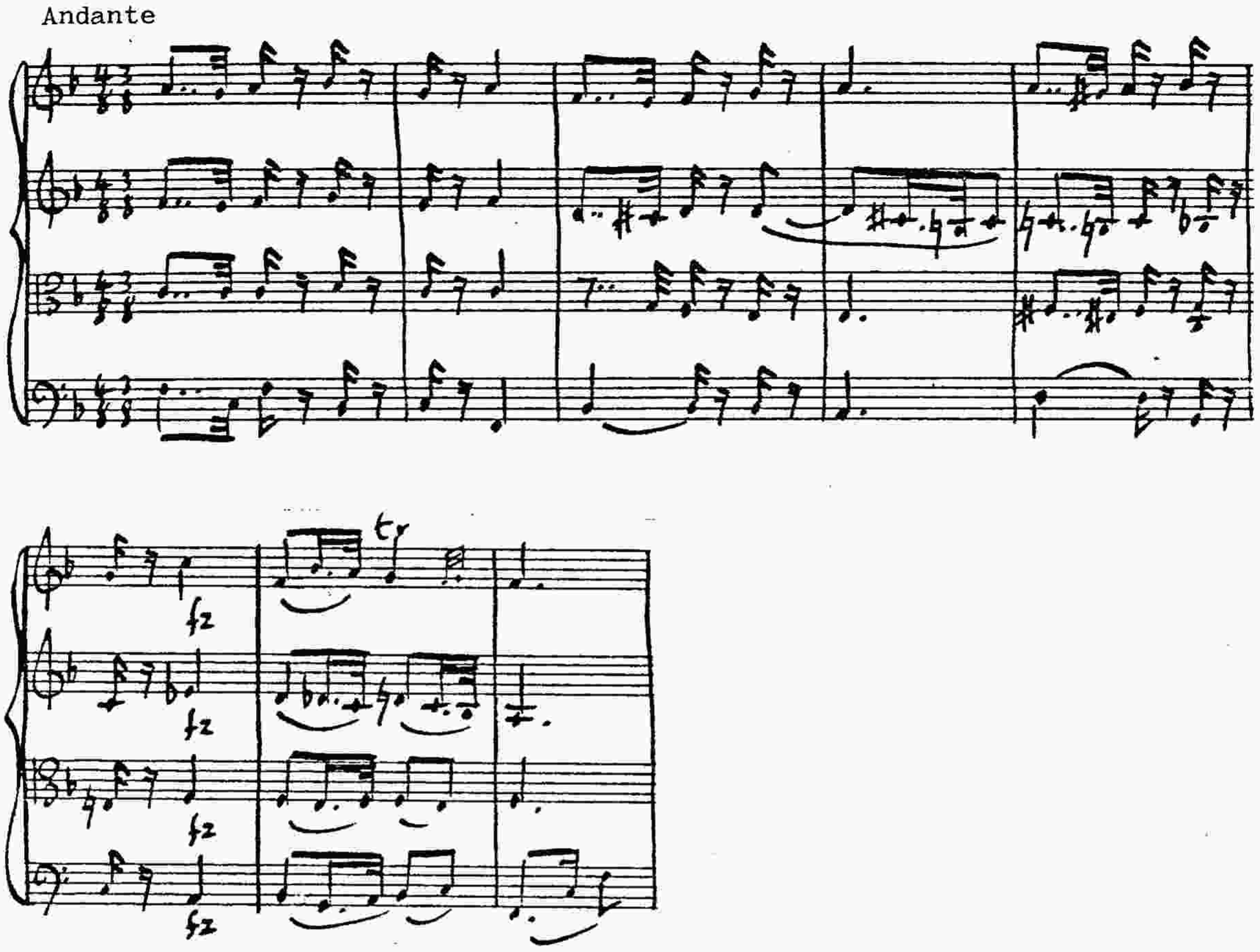


b) String Sextet op.140
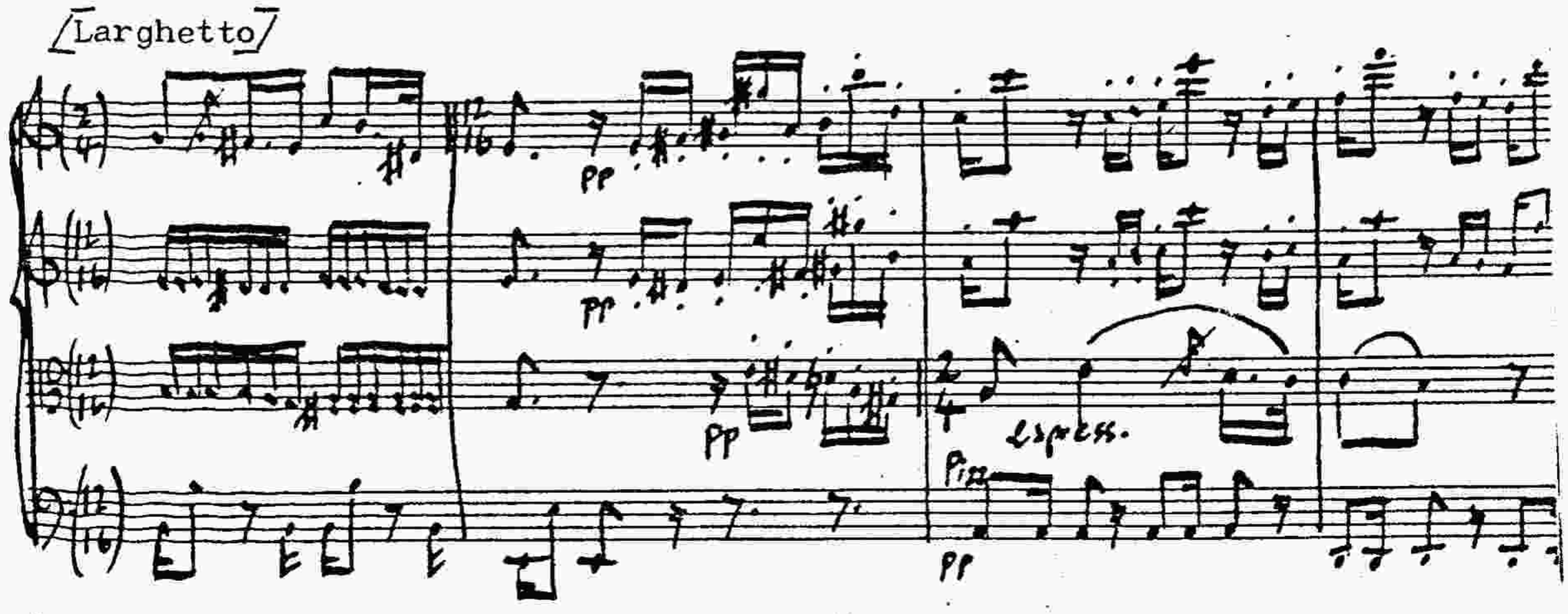


Rhythmically, too, Spohr's music lacks variety. The characteristics most prominent in this aspect of his style are the employment of stock patterns (as in his melodic ideas), the shortness of the constituent rhythmic phrases of a melody and a stolidly regular harmonic movement. As early as 1836 H.J. Gauntlett had commented on 'the terse phrases of his rhythm, always carried on with the most quaker-like regularity',[51] and the charge of stodgy rhythm has often been levelled at Spohr since that time. In fact, though, Spohr seems to have striven frequently to give his music rhythmic interest; irregular phrase lengths are commonly to be met with and he sometimes used devices which seem outwardly very unusual. The changes of time in the second movement of the 12th Violin Concerto have already been alluded to (above p. 272); in the String Quartet op.82 no. 3 (1828) the second movement is written with some bars in 4/8 and others in 3/8 but the alternation is not continued regularly throughout the movement.

Ex. 30 Spohr, String Quartet op.82 no. 3



An even more curious example is the second movement of the Fourth Symphony. Here the programme demands a cradle song, a dance and a serenade; Spohr chose to write the three sections 3/8, 2/8 and 9/16 respectively and at one point in the movement combines them with conflicting time signatures as example 31 shows *(see pp 285-6). In other instances conflicting time signatures are simply cosmetic, making the music look more complicated than it actually is. In the following example Spohr merely uses 12/16 in a 2/4 movement to avoid writing triplets, though it must be admitted that the contrasted character of the two ideas is neatly underlined by the different times.

Ex. 32 Spohr, String Quartet op. 45 no. 2
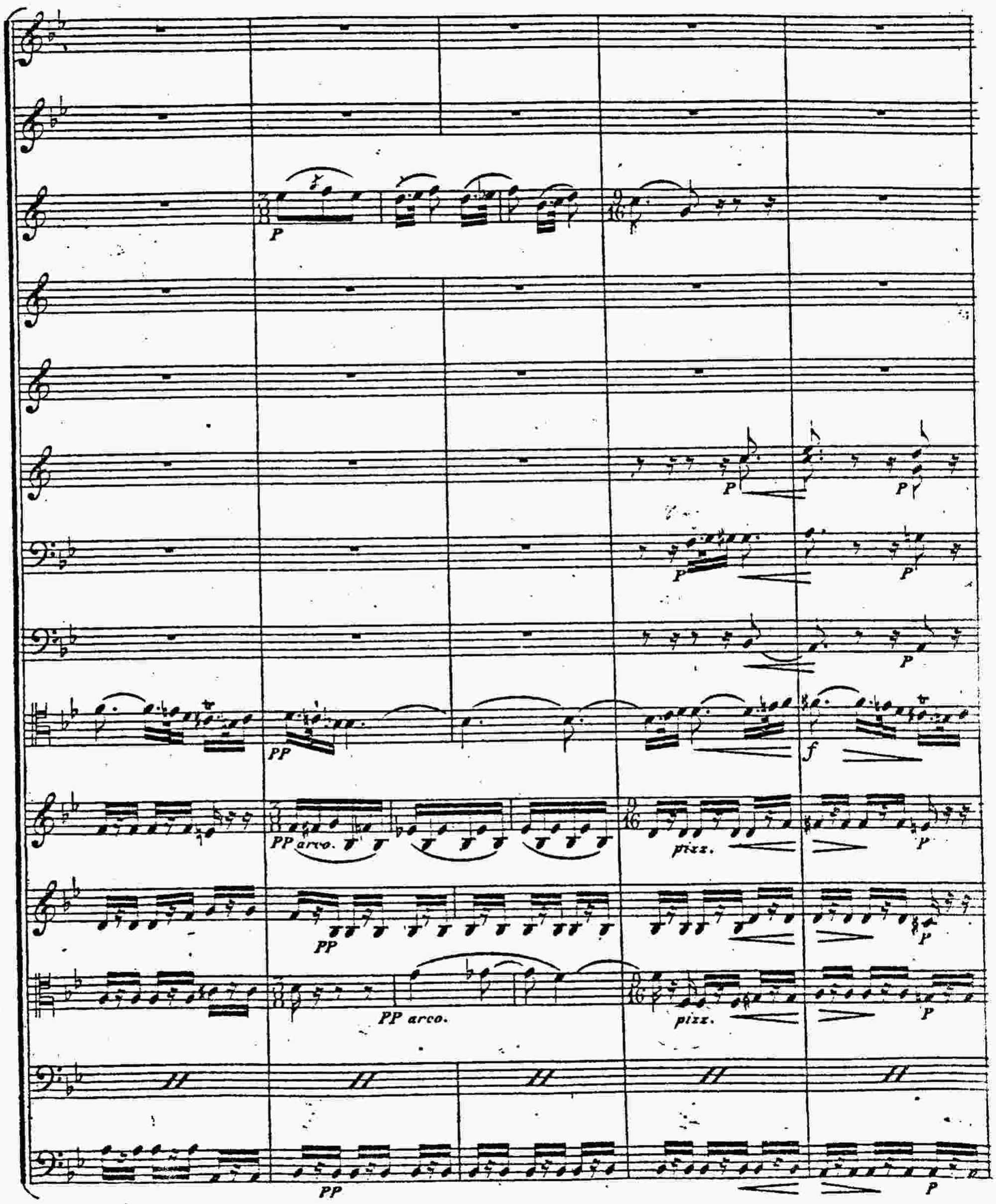


* The idea was possibly derived from Mozart's Don Giovanni.

Ex. 31 Spohr, Symphony no. 4; Die Weihe der Töne

[Andantino]

79



80

Allegro.

P

Allegro.

PP

P

Allegro.

col arco.

PP

col arco.
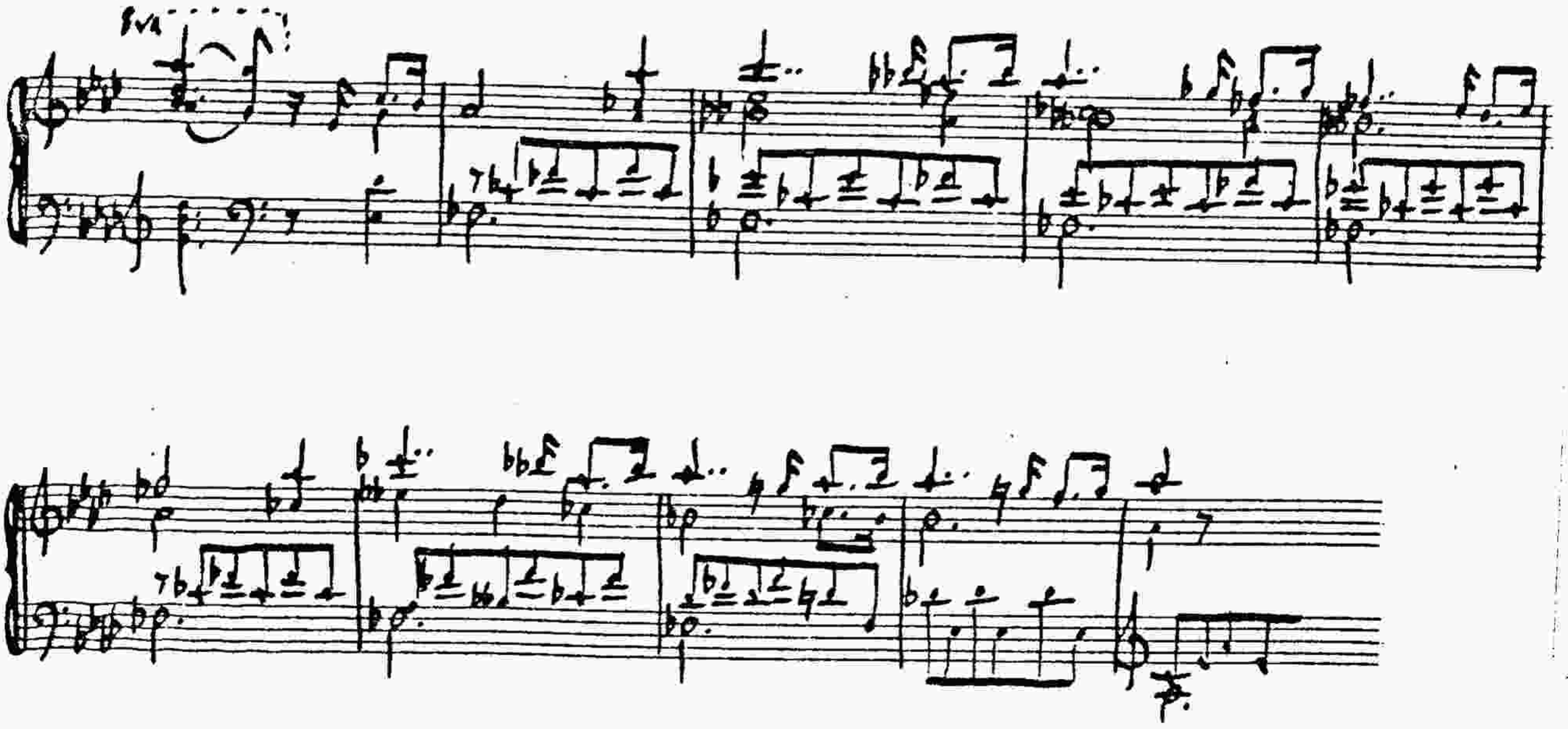
PP

PP

Unfortunately these kinds of expedient could not give more than superficial rhythmic interest, because they did not touch the root of the problem, which was the inflexibility of the basic rhythmic material.

Another important aspect which remains to be considered is Spohr's handling of modulation and harmony in general. B.J. Swalin has noted that he employed 'various pedal-point effects, sudden interchanges of major and minor tonalities, direct modulation to mediant and sub-mediant keys (in some cases prior to Beethoven and Schubert), enharmony, and a profuse display of chromaticism'.[52] Examples of modulations to distant keys are constantly to be met with, in fact, he seems to have felt that a movement was not complete without at least one of his 'interesting harmonic progressions'. Some examples taken at random will illustrate their character. Examples 33 and 34 come from close to the end of a sonata-form movement, a favourite place for Spohr to indulge in remote excursions. Example 35 is another typical example of submedient modulation.
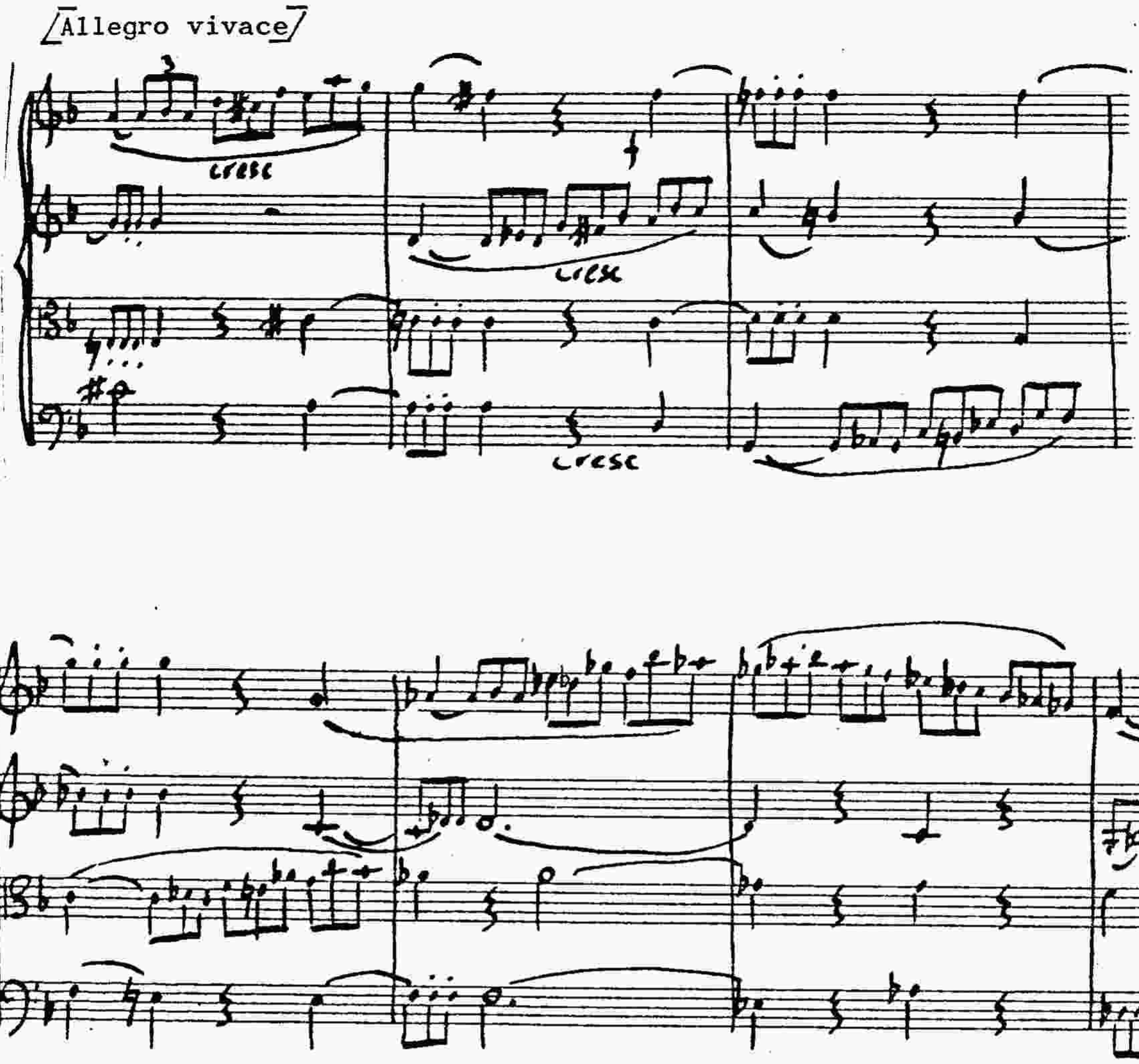
Ex. 33 Spohr, Piano Sonata op.125
/Allegro moderato/



Ex. 34 Spohr, String Quartet op.82 no. 3
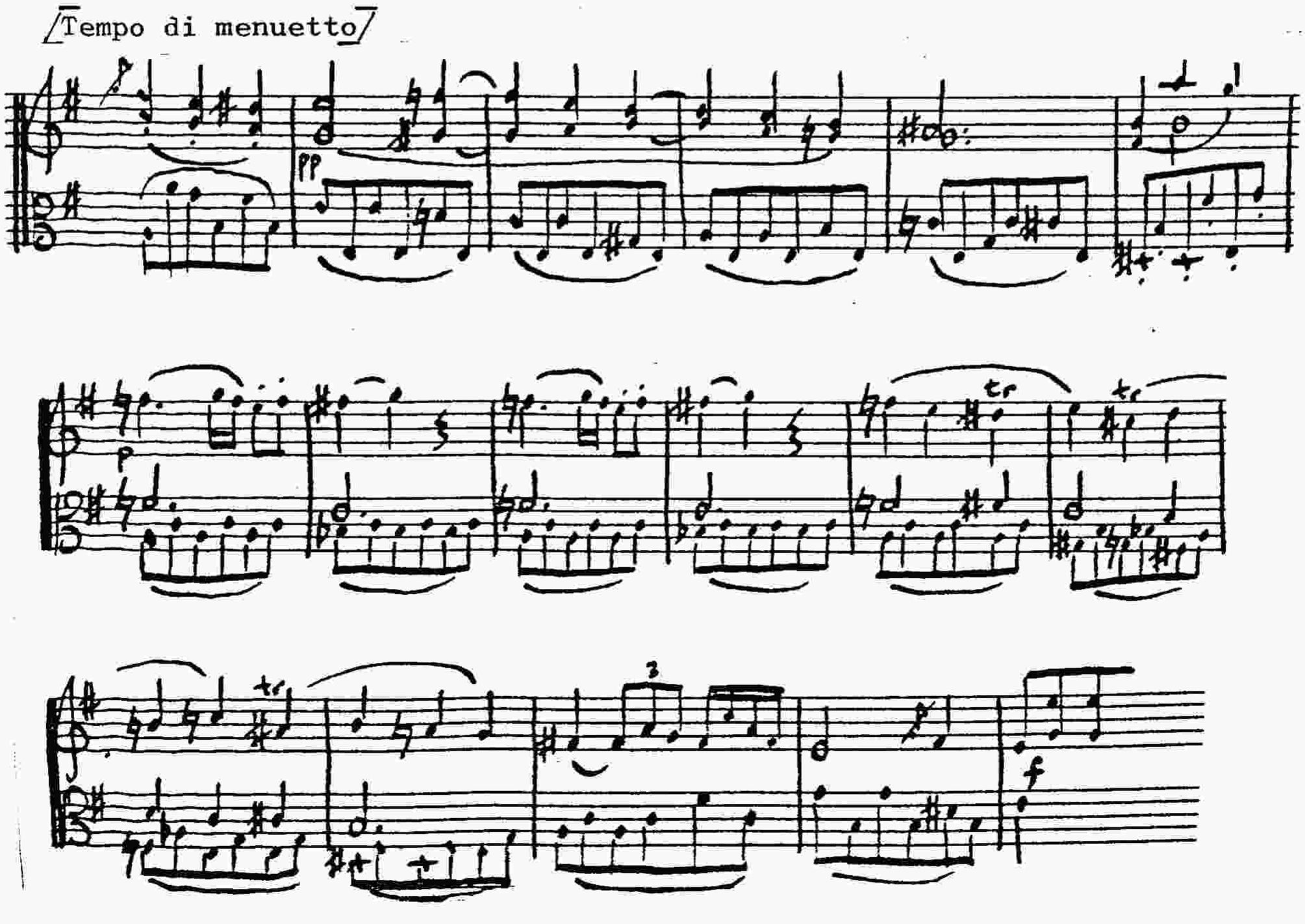
Allegro

Ex. 35 Spohr, String Quartet op.84 no. 1
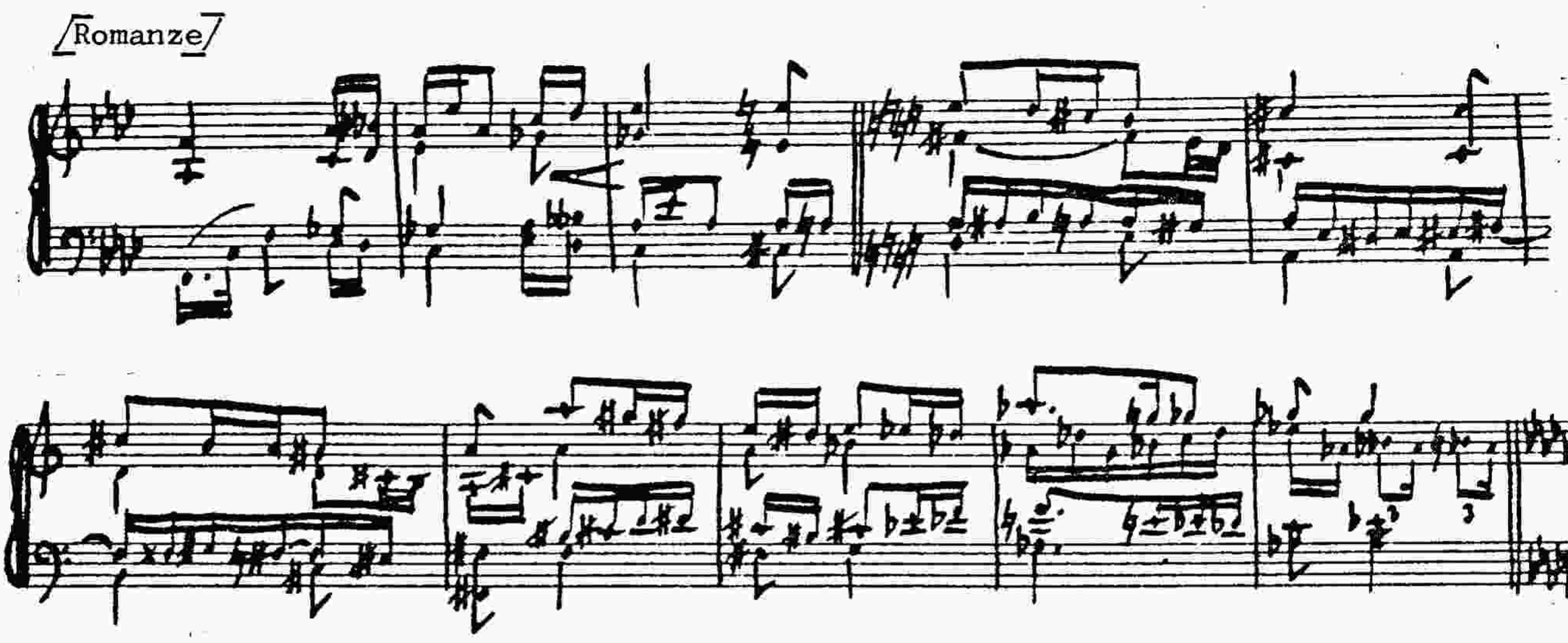


Another of his favourite devices was to shift the key up a semitone for a few bars as in the following example from a relatively early work.

Ex. 36 Spohr, Duo op.13



The next example is a good illustration of his use of enharmonic modulation.

Ex. 37 Spohr, Piano Sonata op.125



It is not difficult to see why so many of his contemporaries found this sort of thing fascinating, but it was a resource which would have proved more effective had it been used with greater discretion. As with so much else in his work the constant reappearance of devices which possessed so much individuality of their own was bound to give the listener a strong feeling that the composer, for want of anything new to say, was reliving old triumphs.

Viewing Spohr's output as a whole it is all too easy to point to his weaknesses, but as even Chorley commented 'So much for drawbacks: but these allowed for, there remains an individual part in Spohr's genius, so sound and beautiful that not to dwell upon it admiringly were an absurd prejudice'.[53] It may not be too bold to assert that the impact of his music on his own contemporaries and its importance as a primary source of inspiration for many of the composers of that period was much greater than is currently accepted. The remarks and writings of composers as different as Weber, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms and Wagner bear witness to the regard in which he was held by his greatest contemporaries and this was not without its perceptible consequences for their music. In seeking the reasons for the eclipse of his reputation there is obviously a tendency to concentrate on his failings and to redress the balance of the exaggerated acclaim which he enjoyed in his lifetime;

but the best of Spohr's output is fine music and his importance both as an influence and as a creative artist are undoubtedly greater than his present neglect seems to indicate.

Chapter 9

Spohr's Influence on English Composers

A great deal of evidence has been presented in earlier chapters which demonstrates conclusively the existence of a widely held belief in England that as a composer Spohr's influence on his younger contemporaries had been very considerable. This belief was vividly expressed by Davison on several occasion in the early 1850's. In the writings of many of those who had lived through the period retrospective references to his influence may similarly be found. William Spark is a particularly valuable witness since he was the biographer and close colleague of Henry Smart and was for many years associated with S.S. Wesley, both of these being composers whom Spohr undoubtedly influenced. In his Musical Memories (1888) he observed of the impact of Spohr's music in the 1830's that:

> Its rich, original, luscious harmonies quite fascinated our English musicians, who, in many instances, failed not to avail themselves of Spohr's style, so that the term "Sporish" soon became associated with a large number of the compositions which were produced at that and subsequent periods by our native composers.[1]

By far the largest number of reviews of compositions by English composers which specifically identify Spohr's influence, are to be found in the 1830's. During that decade almost all English composers who were of any significance, and several who were not, had their indebtedness to Spohr commented upon in the press. A prominent composer whose music escaped the charge of Spohrishness, however, was T.A. Walmisley (1814-56); but in acquitting him of it the critic

of The Morning Chronicle drew attention to its widespread prevalence among other composers. He remarked of Walmisley's setting of the Chancellor's Installation Ode performed at Cambridge in 1835:

> His style has great simplicity, breadth, and clearness. He does not, like too many young composers, render his music harsh and rugged by straining after Spohrisms.[2]

The earliest reference to Spohr's influence on an English composer which has come to light was made by Edward Holmes in The Atlas. Reviewing The Evil Eye by George Rodwell (1800-1852) in 1831 he noted:

> There is some ernest of improvement given in the first songs both of Miss H. Carse and Mr. Millar... In the former, a song in C, there may be found a harmony in Spohr's manner which does Mr. Rodwell credit.[3]

On the whole, however, Rodwell's music is not conspicuous for its adoption of complex harmony or other features which might be regarded as Spohrish.

One of the oldest of the musicians in whose work traces of Spohr's style were detected was Henry R. Bishop (1786-1855). H.J. Gauntlett, writing about Des Heilands letzte Stunden in 1836, had observed of Spohr: 'We know of no native composer who has embodied his style as it respects the harmony, and much less the extremely symmetrical and artificial character of his melody'. But having said that, he qualified his assertion, saying: 'Mr. Bishop has, in some measure, followed the division of the composer's harmonies'[4] (and he also admitted Spohr's influence on Barnett, which will be examined in due course).

It may seem curious that Bishop, who had begun the production of his enormous output as early as 1804, should have been susceptible to an influence which could hardly have been exerted before the 1820's. He was, however, a notably eclectic composer; his attitude towards music appears to have been that of an entrepreneur rather than a committed artist. He was a talented craftsman but evinced few aspirations to originality. His own words, in a letter of 1840, written at a time when he found himself losing his hold on the public and under financial pressure, clearly illustrates his eclecticism. He complained:

> I have been a slavish servant to the public; and too often, when I have turned each way their weathercock taste pointed, they have turned round on me and upbraided me for not remaining where I was! ... Had the public remained truly and loyally English, I would have remained so too! But I had my bread to get, and was obliged to watch their caprices, and give them an exotic fragrance if I could not give them the plant, when I found they were tired of, and neglected the native productions.[5]

Thus in 1826 he produced his Aladdin at Drury Lane in the wake of the success of Weber's Oberon at Covent Garden. Bishop had taken almost a year over the work, an exceptionally long time for him, but the libretto was even worse than that of Oberon and the opera was a failure since Bishop's music could not compensate for its banality. According to W. Barclay Squire, 'by attempting to meet Weber on his own ground, he had only succeeded in producing a weak imitation of the style of the German master'.[6]
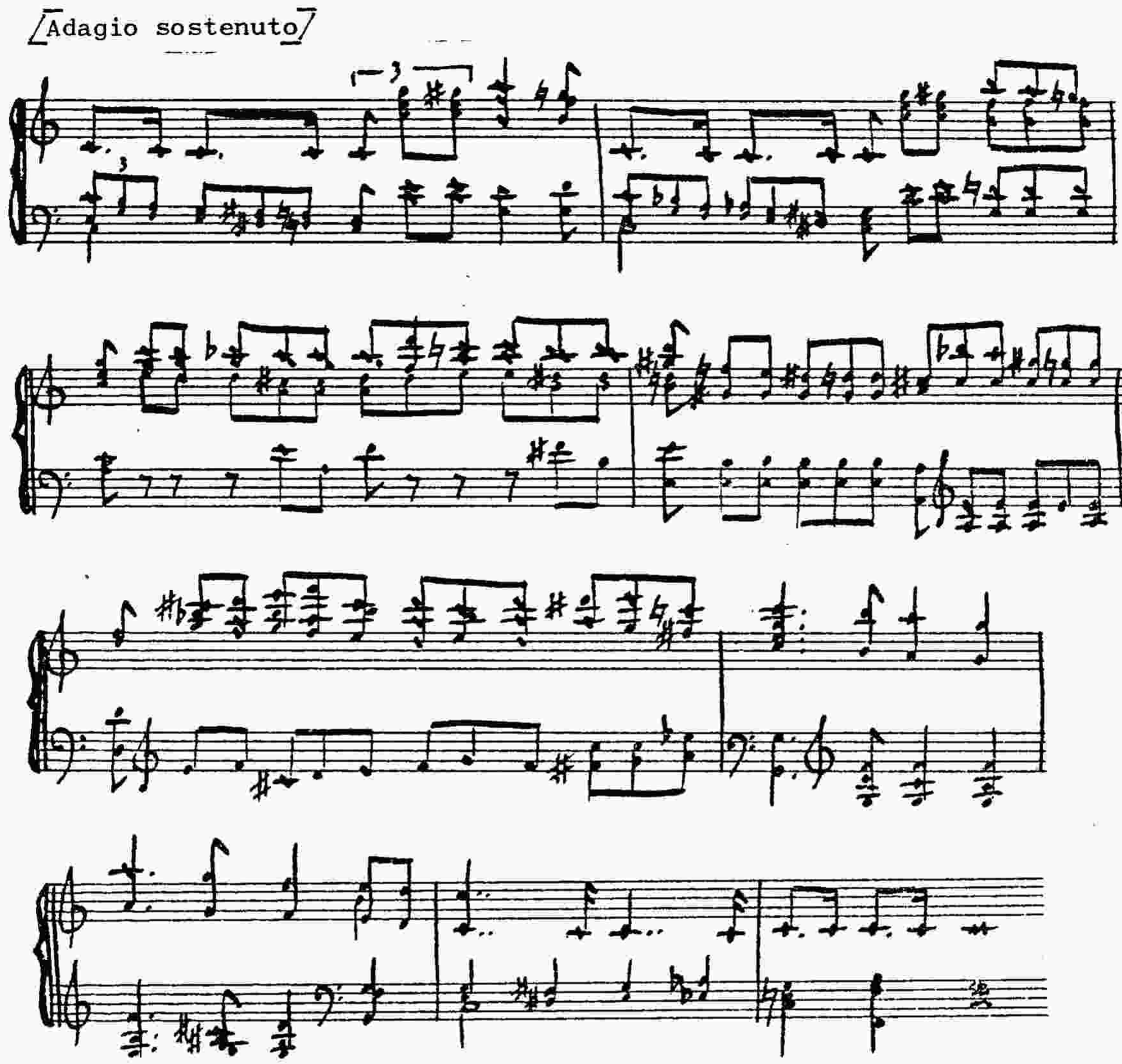
Bishop's role in introducing numbers from Spohr's operas at the Philharmonic concerts and in bringing out an English version of Der Alchymist at Drury Lane in 1832 have been noted; in view of the upsurge of interest in Spohr which followed the introduction of The Last Judgement it would have been surprising if he had not been tempted to follow the exotic fragrence of Weber with the heady incense of Spohr. In Bishop's operas it is difficult to distinguish Spohr's influence from that of Weber, but when he attempted sacred music in the 1830's he could hardly, after the success of The Last Judgement, have chosen any other model than Spohr. His cantata The Seventh Day, written in response to a Philharmonic Society commission in 1832, proves the truth of this. Reviewing it in 1836 The Musical World observed:

> In the present composition Spohr has been undoubtedly Mr. Bishop's model; and many of the leading features of the style of this eminent musician he has ingeniously made his own. There is the same German impress in the original and strongly marked design of the modulations; and in the perfect disposition of the harmonies, (upon paper at least) the imitation is perfect. What the effect of the instrumentation may be, at present we have no means of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion. In the strength and freedom, brilliancy and fervour of his scores, Spohr leaves competition almost hopeless.[7]
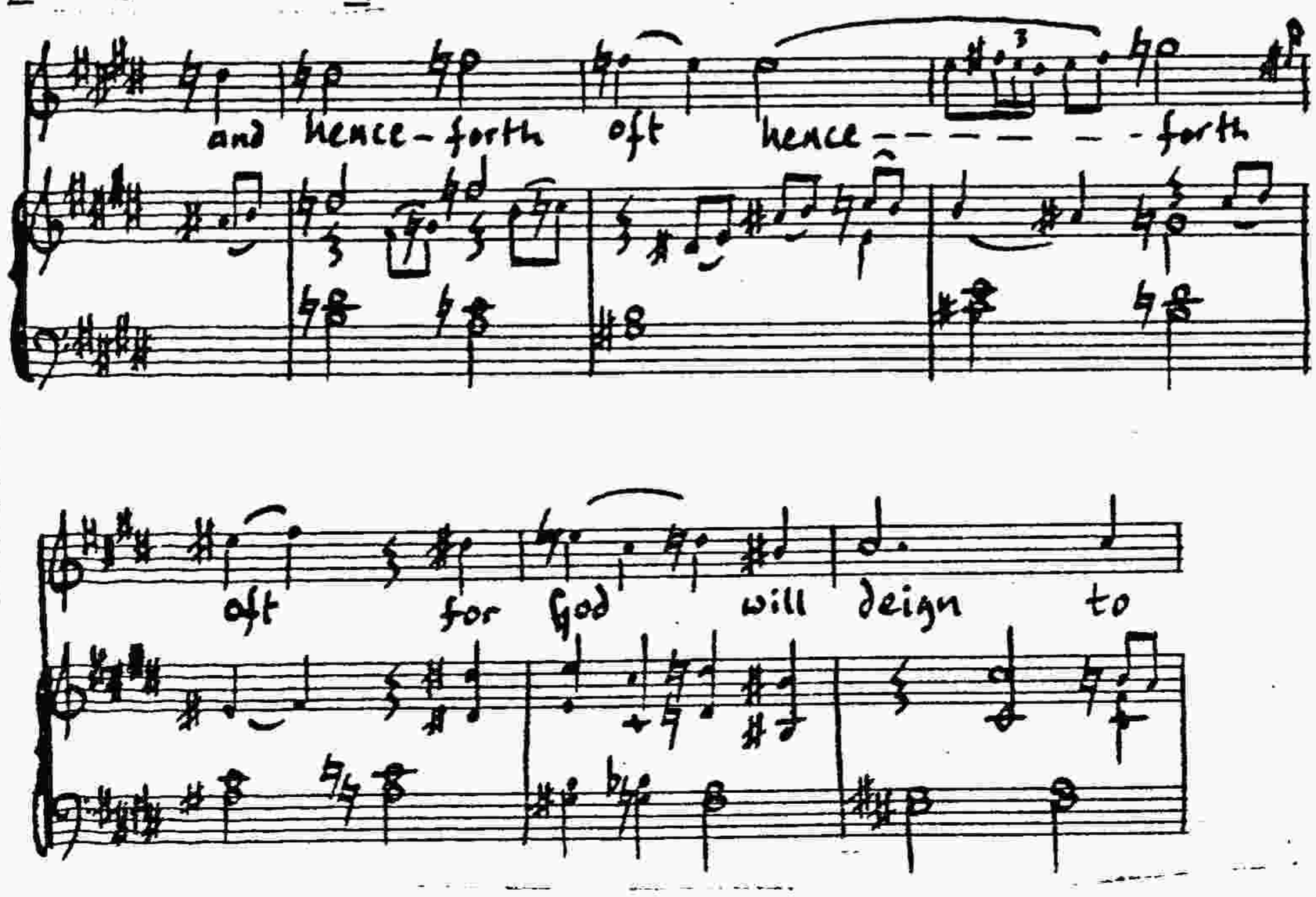
When performed at Norwich later in the year The Morning Chronicle dismissed the cantata as 'a noisy imitation of Spohr'.[8]

The following extracts are typical examples of the sort of chromaticism which Bishop had adopted in this work.

Ex. 1 Bishop, The Seventh Day, Introduction

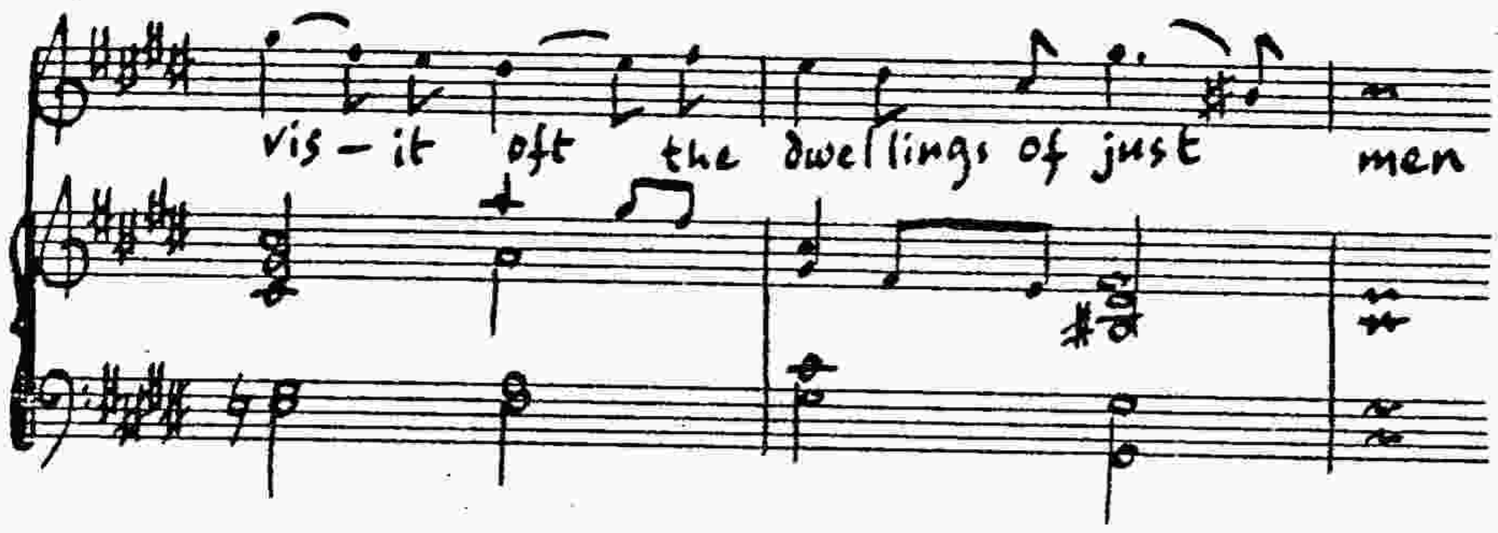


Ex. 2 Bishop, The Seventh Day, 'Open ye everlasting gates'



Cont...

Ex. 2 Cont.



The design of the cantata as a whole also recalls Spohr's Last Judgement, with its use of solo quartet and chorus and its lack of formal division into airs and choruses.*

As may be inferred from his own admission, however, Bishop's adoption of other composers' styles was a calculated matter; he put them on and off as easily as he might have changed the fashion of his clothes, and underneath the outward changes his basically Italianate style, inherited from his teacher Bianchi, remained essentially unaltered. The appearance of Spohrish features in the 1830's did not signal any change of direction in his work.

John Barnett (1802-1890), who like Bishop wrote much music for the English stage, had stronger natural affinities with the German school. He was a second cousin of Meyerbeer and retained many German connections. It seems probable that the appearance of Spohrish elements in his music was less the result of deliberate calculation than of genuine admiration. After commenting on Bishop's use of Spohr's harmonic idiom, Gauntlett had continued:

> Mr Barnett has also done the same thing, and in some measure adopted the cantabile of Spohr's melody.[9]

Other critics, too, observed this tendency in Barnett's music, but it was seen as one among several important influences on his style. The Musical World commented on his overture and music from Blanch of Jersey:

> In his style the feeling of Mozart is uppermost and intense. Weber and Spohr are also among his household divinities.[10]
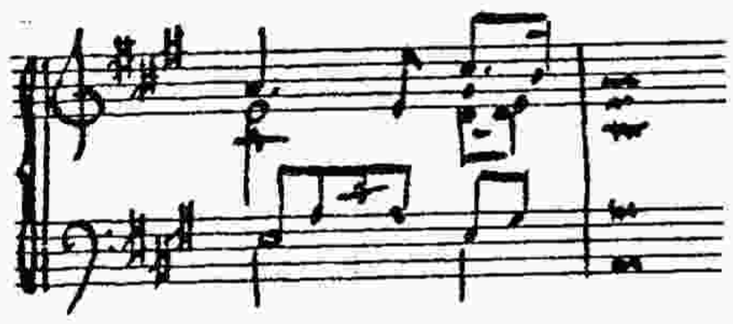
* Nicholas Temperley in Instrumental Music in England 1800 - 1850 (Ph.D. Cantab. 1959) p. 132 maintained that The Seventh Day came before the influence of Spohr and Mendelssohn.

And The Atlas remarked of his opera Fair Rosamond that it abounded with 'chromatic progressions imitated from the German' and observed: 'Mr Barnett sets Spohr and Weber before him and strives with might and main to reach the excellence of these models'. More specifically the critic commented:

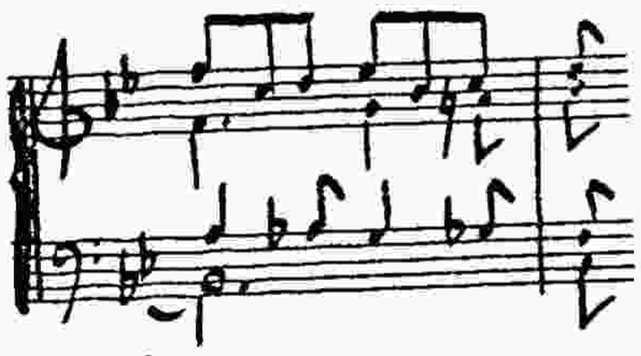
> In the modulation of his recitative, the author has adopted the model of Spohr and has a similar frequency of the enharmonic.[1]

The accuracy of these judgements is amply borne out by the music. The opening of the scena 'Ah me! he comes not' from Fair Rosamond clearly demonstrates Barnett's indebtedness to Spohr in its handling of the recitative; but there is no lack of Spohrish features elsewhere. The aria which follows this recitative, for instance, shows the melodic similarities to which Gauntlett referred and employes a cadential figure which is one of Spohr's trademarks.

Ex. 3 Barnett, Fair Rosamond, 'Ah me! he comes not'

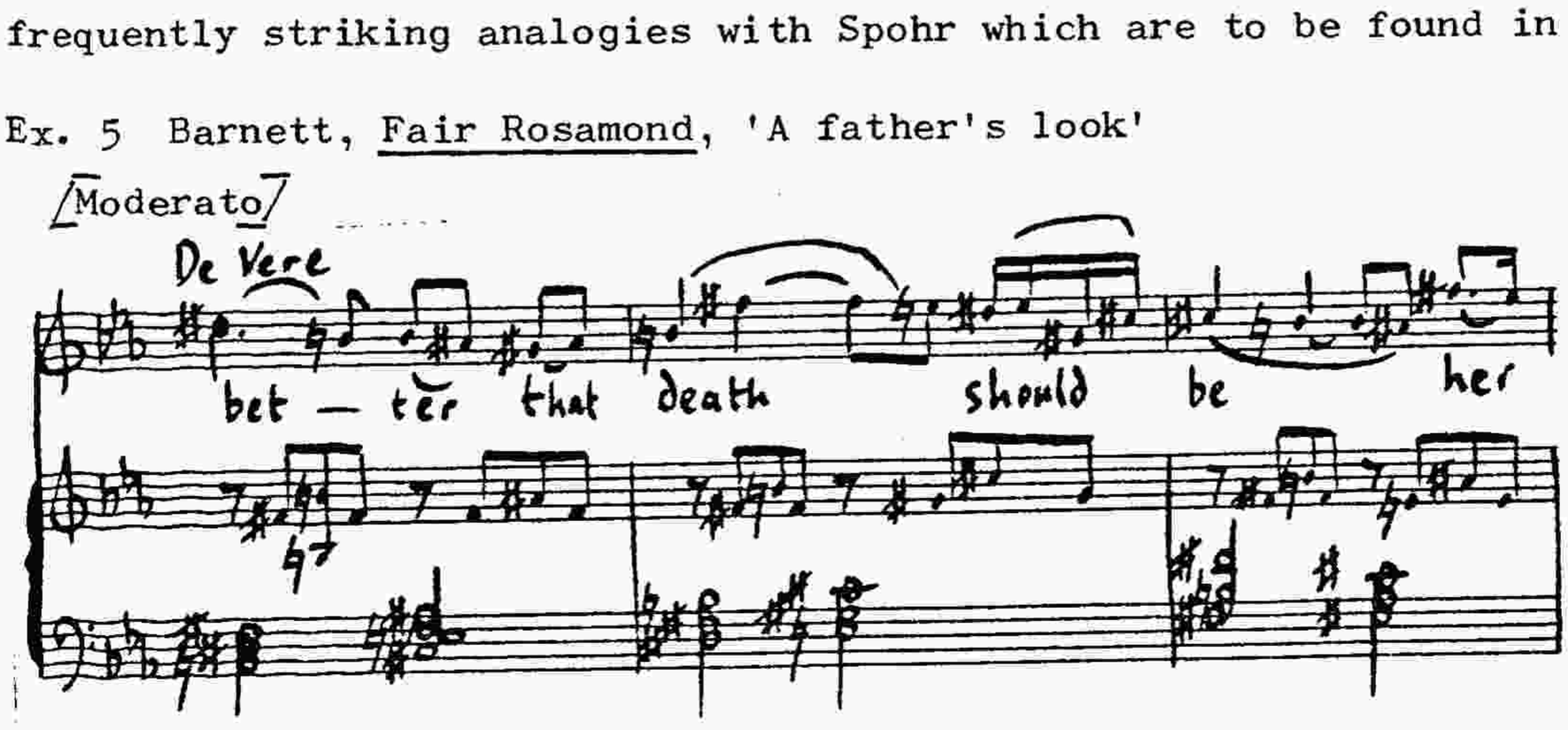


Ex. 4 Barnett, Fair Rosamond, 'Safe in that bow'r'
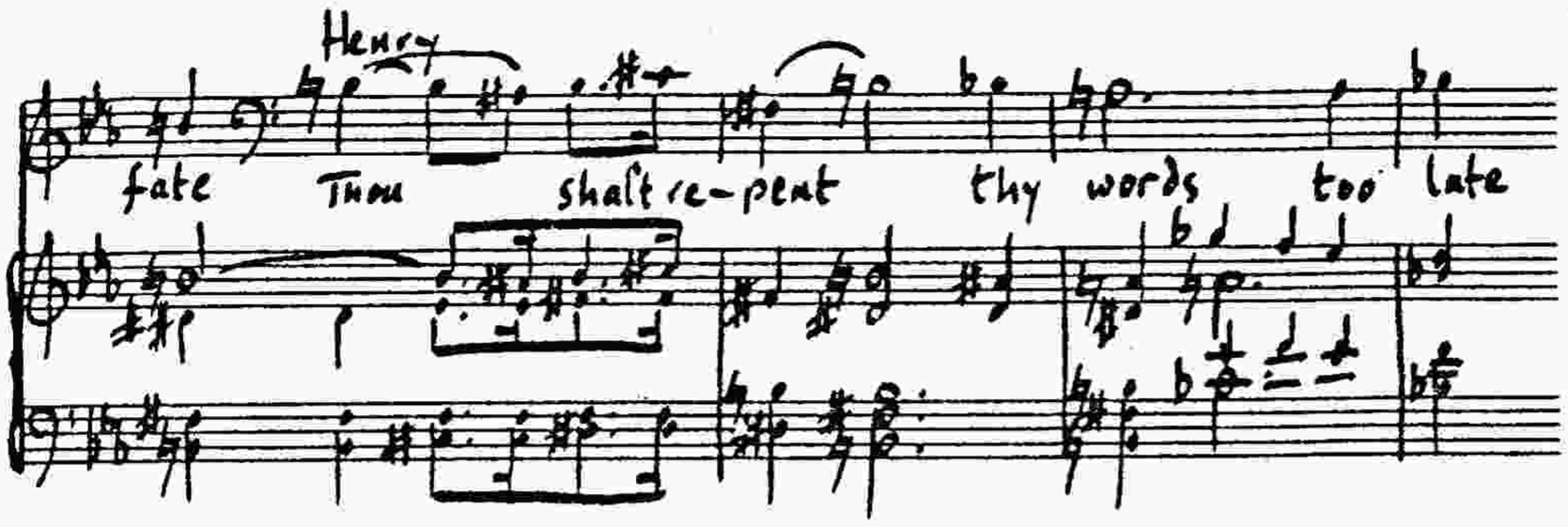


In 'Safe in that bow'r' occurs another typically Spohrish phrase. The following more extended quotation from the same opera is an example of the frequently striking analogies with Spohr which are to be found in it:

Ex. 5 Barnett, Fair Rosamond, 'A father's look'
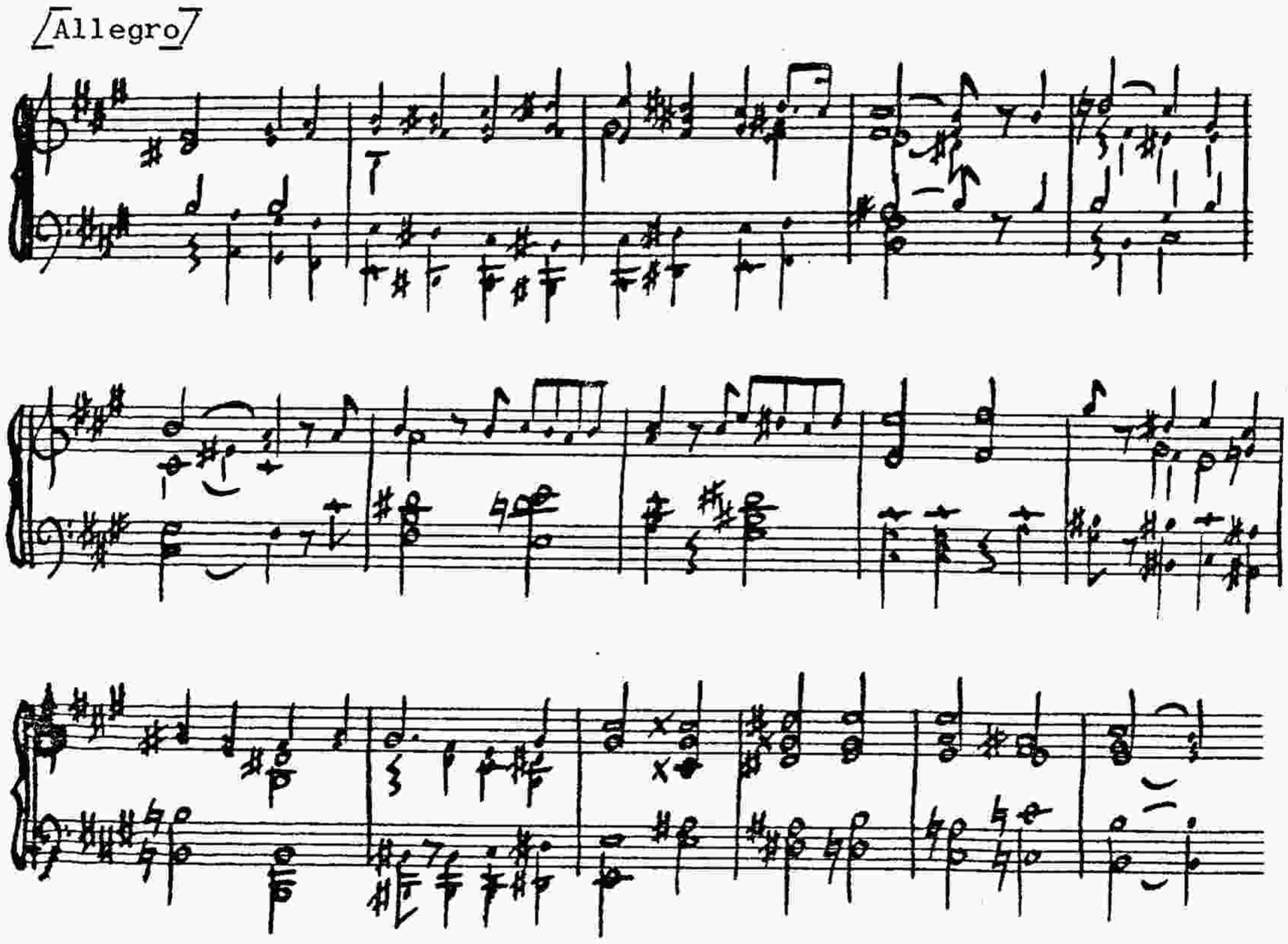


Cont

Ex. 5 Cont.



Barnett's 'German' chromaticism is evident throughout the opera, and the following passage from the overture demonstrates how, like Spohr, Barnett blusters all round a key without actually getting anywhere in the end.

Ex. 6 Barnett, Fair Rosamond, Overture



Similar traits are to be found in The Mountain Sylph, and it seems clear that Spohr's influence was very considerable in the formation of Barnett's style.
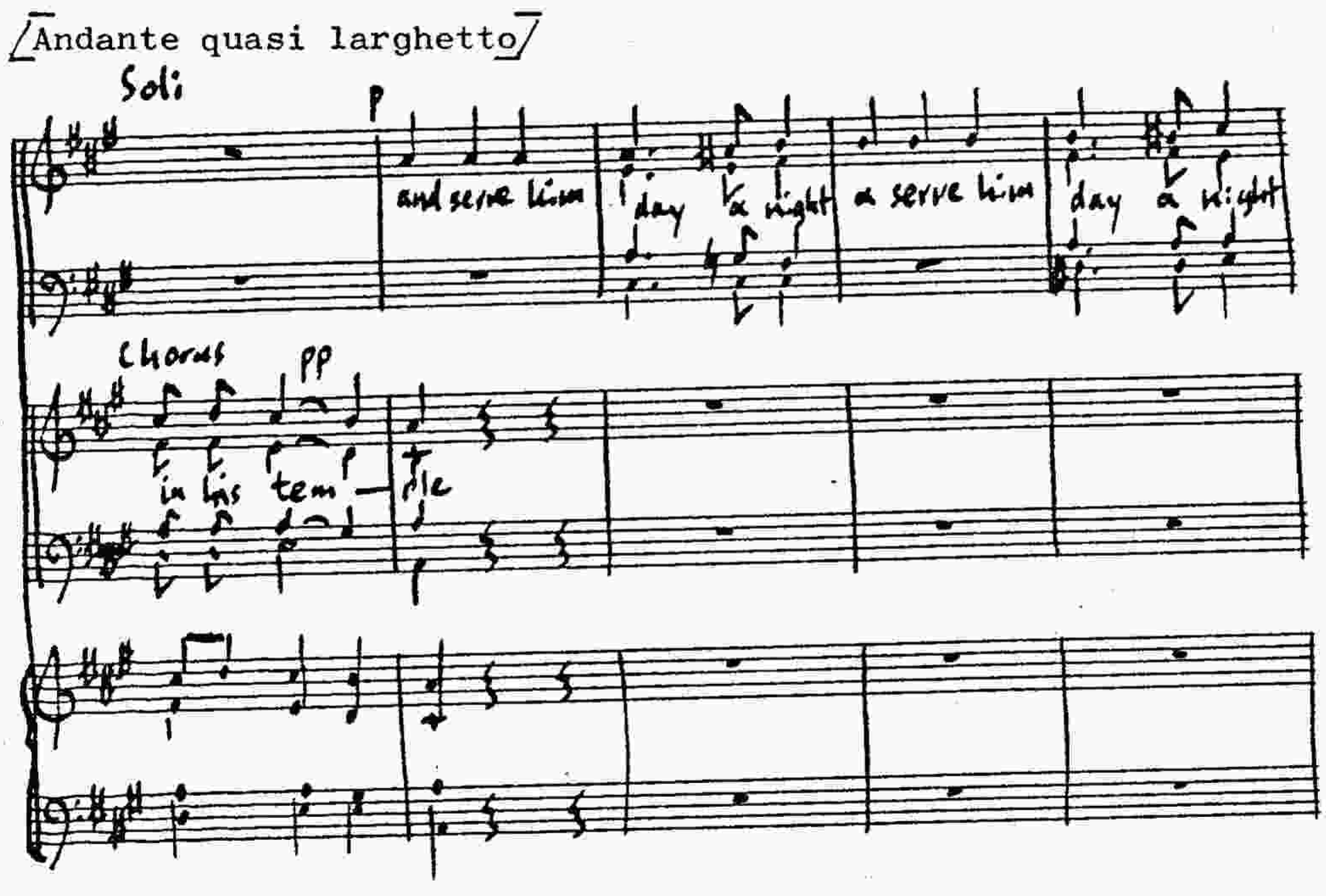
Henry Smart (1813 - 1879) was a nephew of Sir George Smart and an accomplished organist. His early familiarity with and admiration for Spohr's music is unquestionable; like so many of his contemporaries he was enthusiastic to the extent of plagiarism in many of his works written during the 1830's. One of his earliest substantial compositions was an Anthem for the Tercentenary

of the Reformation first performed at Blackburn in 1835. His biographer and friend William Spark remarked that 'It gives evidence of Smart's admiration for Spohr rather than the devotional and graver spirit which marked his later church music'.[12] This likeness was equally clear to a contemporary reviewer in The Musical World, who observed that it contained:

> a very beautiful quartet and chorus 'Therefore are they before the throne of God...;' in the general treatment of which, the author's acquaintance with Spohr's 'Last Judgement' is pretty apparent, most especially in the progression of the chords in the last two or three bars pianissimo. A soprano solo in 9/8 time follows... - in our estimation the gem of the whole anthem. It is strongly marked with the sweet and flowing manner of Spohr, combining also the unvulgar simplicity which characterises that great composer's pastoral movements...[13]
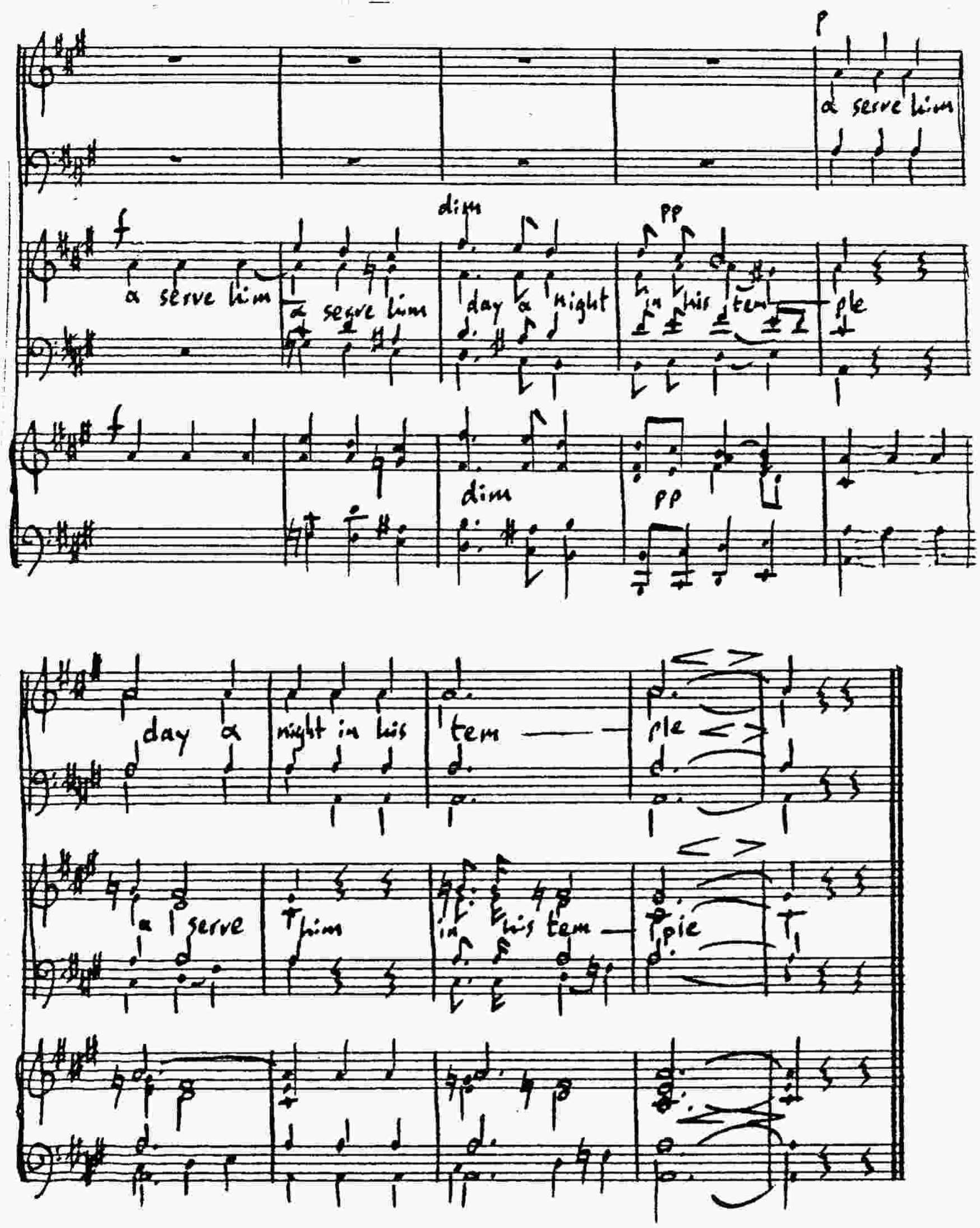
The following extracts from the movements referred to, show the closeness of the similarity.

Ex. 7 Smart, Anthem, 'Therefore are they before the throne'
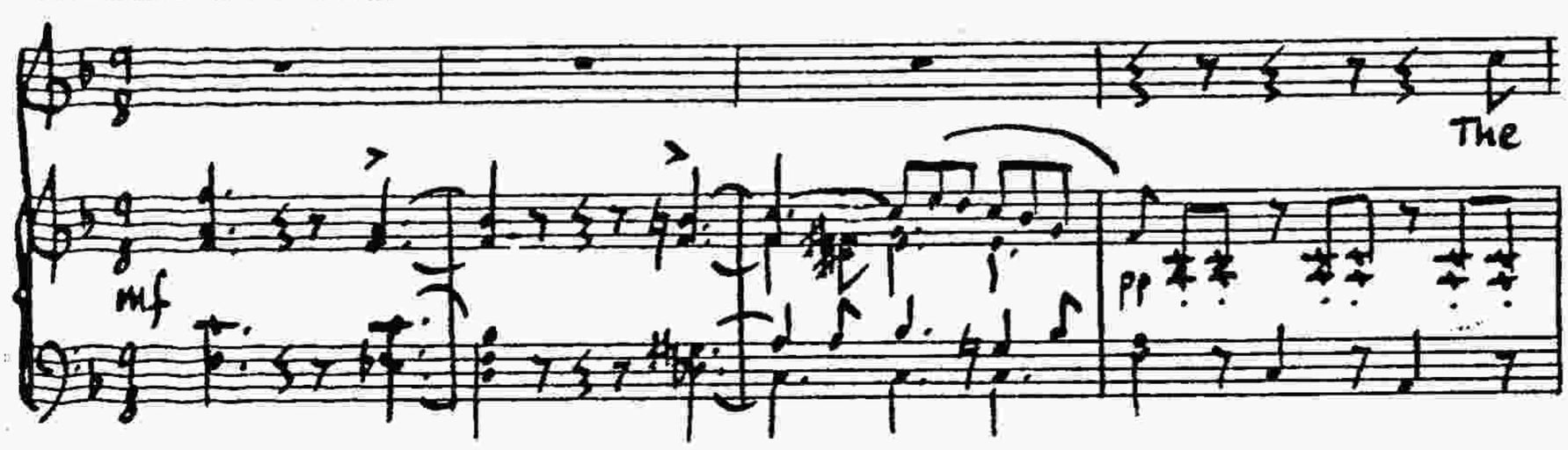


Cont...

Ex. 7 Cont.
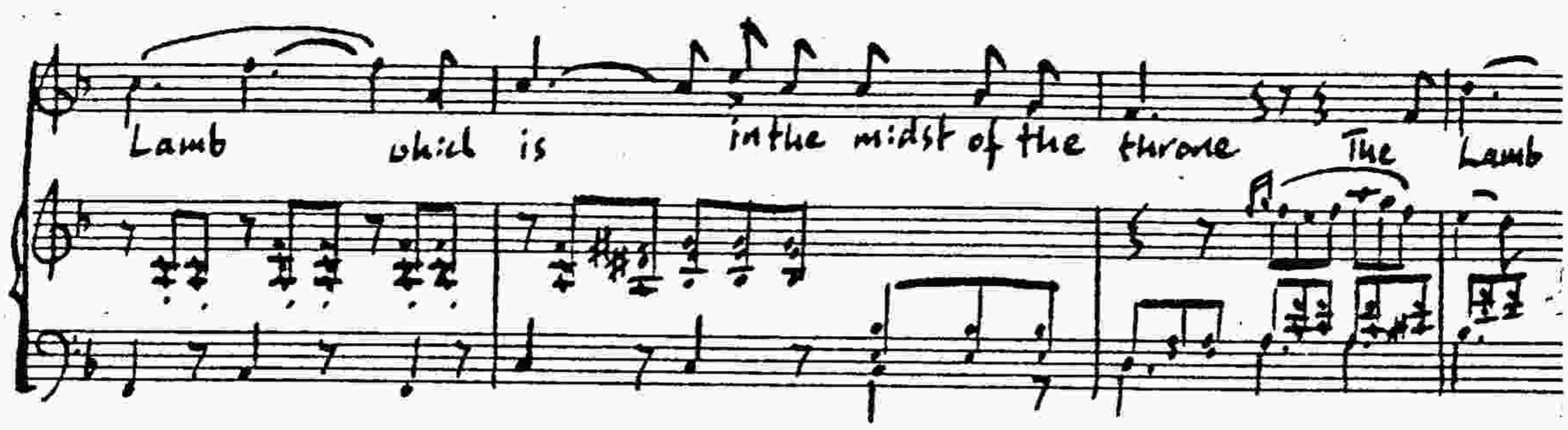


Ex. 8 Smart, Anthem, 'The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne'

Andante con moto



Cont...
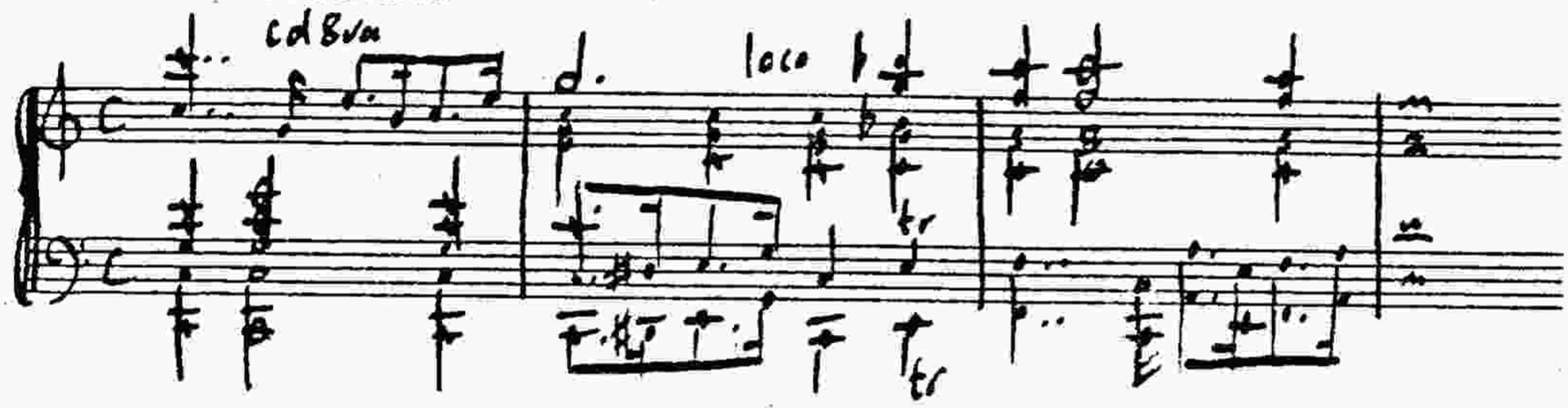
Ex. 8 Cont.



The dotted rhythms of the overture, too, recall the overture to The Last Judgement.
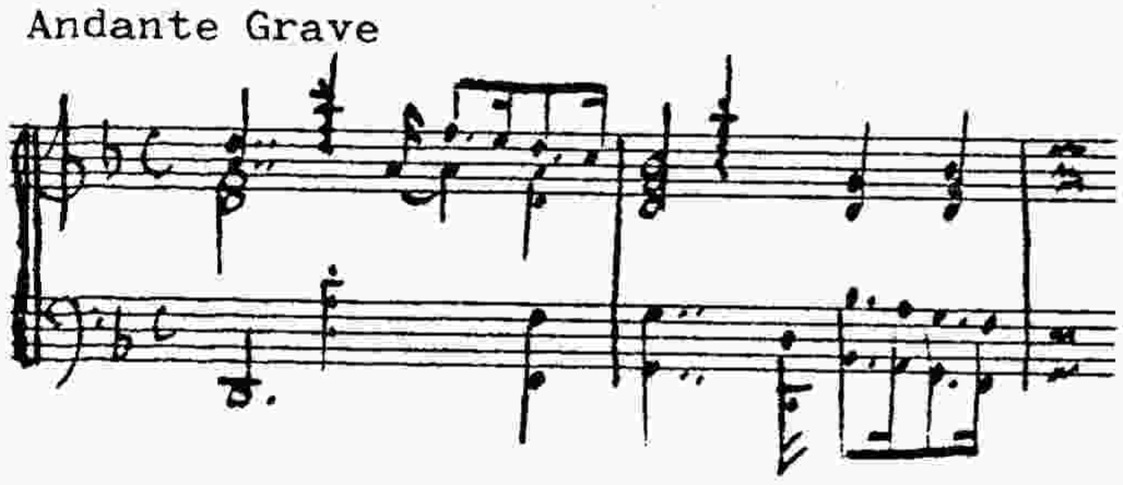
Ex. 9 Smart, Anthem, Overture

Andante sostenuto



Ex. 10 Spohr, The Last Judgement, Overture

Andante Grave



Spohr's influence was also detected in an overture (untraceable) which was played through at a Philharmonic trial night in 1838. A critic from The Musical World was present at the trial and commented:
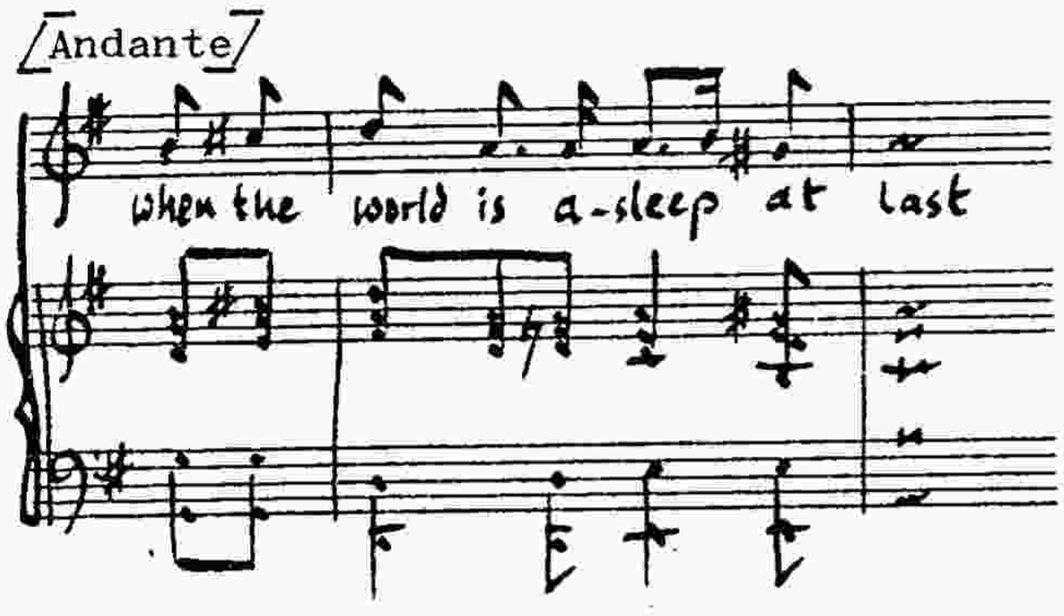
> Mr. Smart...was very fortunate in having his overture performed by so magnificent a band; but he should remember, that while imitating the orchestral arrangements of Louis Spohr, he should scrupulously avoid the loan of phrases of this master...[14]

As was the case with other composers,[14] Smart's youthful enthusiasm for Spohr was overlaid at a slightly later period by the influence of Mendelssohn, but not to the extent that it was entirely obliterated. In 1842 The Times observed of the performance of a song which had just been published in The British Vocal Album, edited by J.W. Davison:

> Among the vocal performances, one of the most effective was that of a new song 'Estelle,' the composition of Mr. H. Smart, and executed by Miss Dolby. It is written in the modern German style, and is evidently the work of an enthusiastic disciple of Spohr.[15]

The general cast of the melody and certain features of the harmony are clearly reminiscent of Spohr, in particular Smart's use of the following chromatic cadence.

Ex. 11 Smart, 'Estelle'
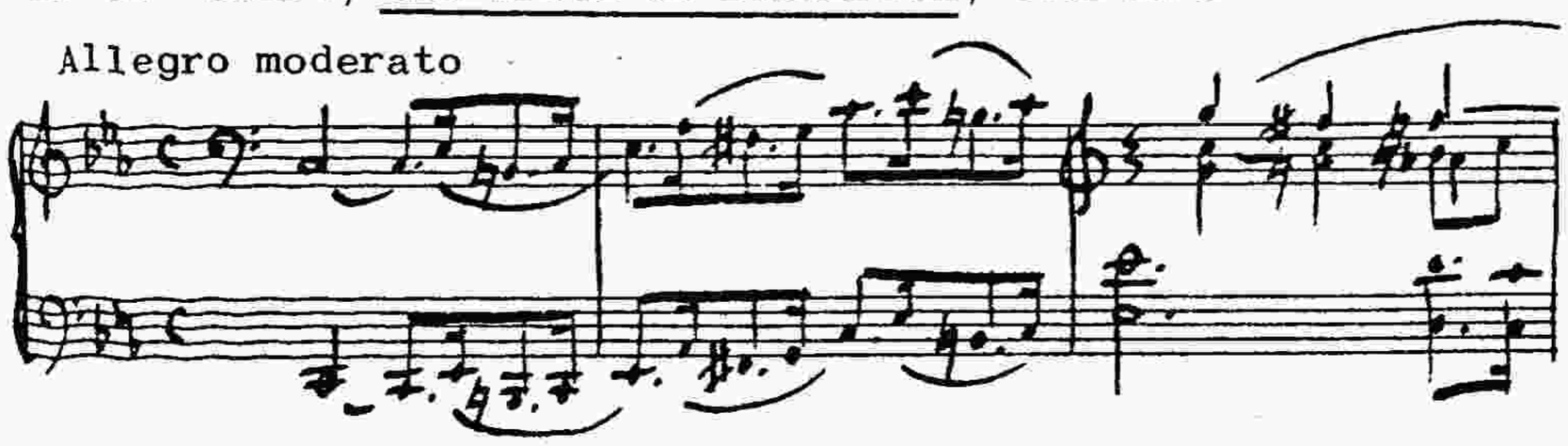


Mendelssohn's influence came more and more to predominate in Smart's music as time went by, so that in the 1860's Joseph Bennet of The Daily Telegraph could comment that his oratorio Jacob was 'emphatically of the school of Mendelssohn'[16]; but Davison, whose friendship with Smart over many years lends credibility to his judgement, assessed his style (in a review of The Bride of Dunkerron in 1864) in the following terms:

> That Mr. Smart has a strong sympathy for Mendelssohn, is evident; but he envinces also an occasional leaning towards Spohr, and out of the two elements he has formed a style which may justly be called his own, and which is at once elegant, polished, aristocratic and intellectual.
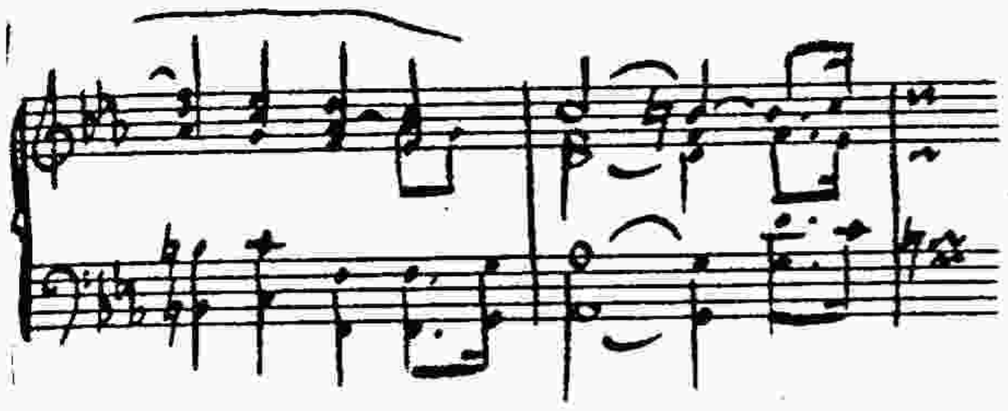
The continuing influence of Spohr can certainly be seen in the overture of this cantata, whose beginning recalls both the opening symphony to part two of The Last Judgement and the introduction to the third act of Faust (quoted above p.281).

Ex. 12 Smart, The bride of Dunkerron, Overture



Cont...

Ex. 12 Cont.



William Sterndale Bennett(1816-1875) was the only English composer of the first half of the nineteenth century (with the possible exception of Henry Hugo Pearson who made his home in Germany) who established a reputation outside England. He alone was able to compose orchestral and instrumental works which were thought fit to take their place by the side of those of the finest European composers of the period. His Naiades overture, for instance, was published in full score in Germany at a time when few printed scores were issued, and it was, according to W.S. Rockstro, 'in a category far above that in which any other contemporaneous composition - save only the best productions of Mendelssohn and Spohr - can be justly classed'.[18] A composer as obviously sincere and gifted as Bennett was, cannot be considered a copyist; but he was not free from the prevailing influences of his time. Fuller-Maitland observed of him that:
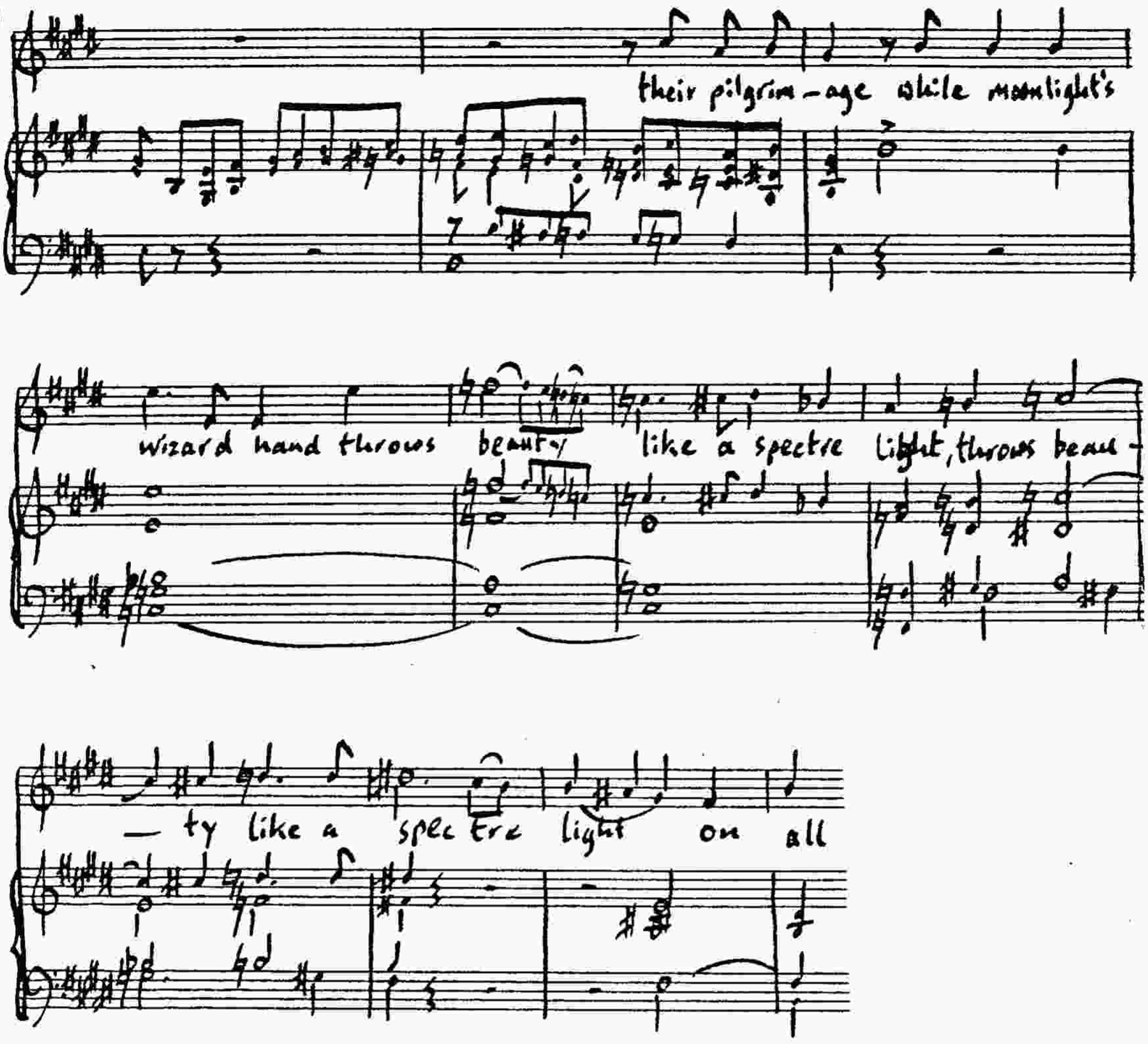
> As beauty, or at least symmetry, of form and design had special attractions for him, he found no difficulty in falling in with the Mendelssohn worship of the time, and his own style, which had been developed under Cipriani Potter and Crotch at the Royal Academy of Music, long before he had the opportunity of meeting Mendelssohn or knowing much about his music, was so remarkably similar to Mendelssohn's that he has often been accused of imitating too closely, or even of having been his pupil.

What Fuller-Maitland did not consider, or did not know, however, was that the dominant influence on young composers at the time Bennett's style was being formed was Spohr.

There is no mistaking Spohr's influence in many of Bennett's earliest works, and this is all the more so since most of the features which may be directly attributed to his admiration for Spohr are very much less apparent in his later works. A good example of Bennett's early tendency to Spohrishness may be seen in his Canzonet 'In radiant loveliness', written while he was

still a student at the Royal Academy of Music.

Ex. 13 Bennett, 'In radiant loveliness'



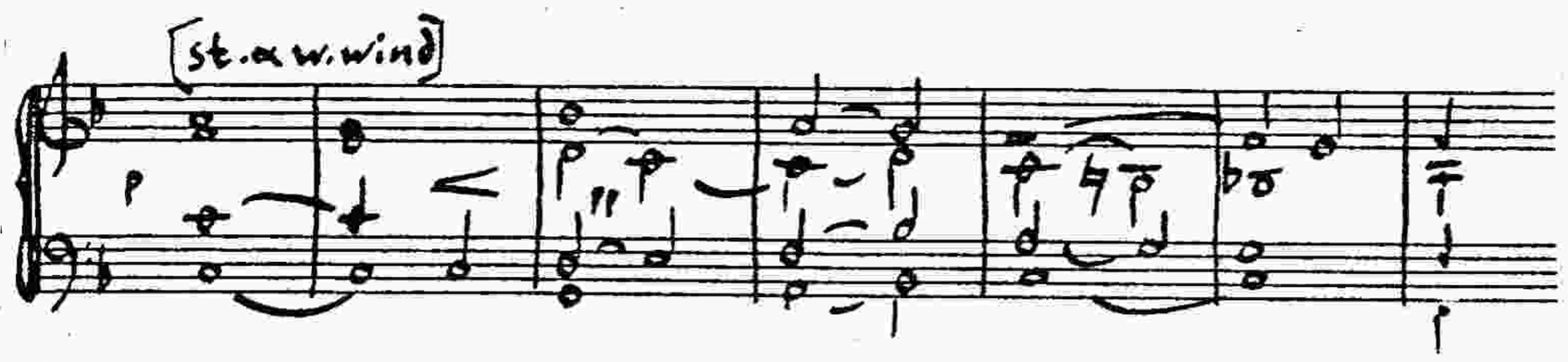
A copy of Spohr's Lieder op.37 in the Royal Academy of Music library, which was probably there in Bennett's time, contains, in the first song 'Mignons Lied', the same melodic fragment used by Bennett in the sixth bar of this extract.

In Bennett's work of the 1830's there are many characteristics which owe something to Spohr's example. This was acknowledged by Schumann in a criticism of Bennett's overture The Wood Nymphs (1838) of which he commented:
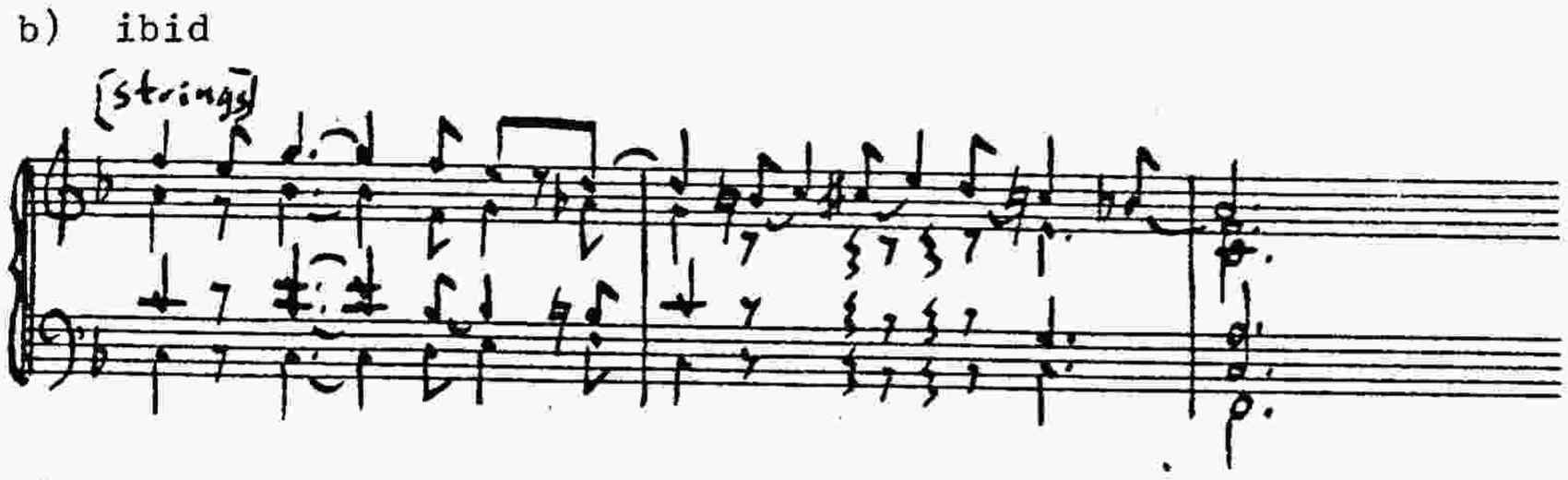
> Indeed the overture is charming, and with the exception of Spohr and Mendelssohn I know of no living composer who is such a master in delicacy and softness of colouring as Bennett. I will even forget that he has taken much from those two artists.[20]

Some of the features which probably suggested Spohr's influence to Schumann can be seen in such passages as the following:
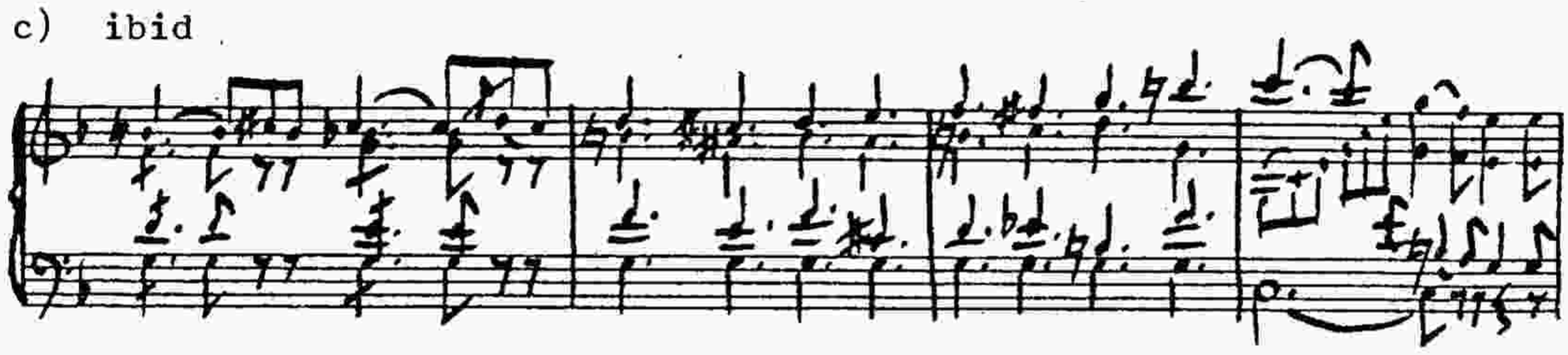
Ex. 14 a) Bennett, Overture The Wood Nymphs
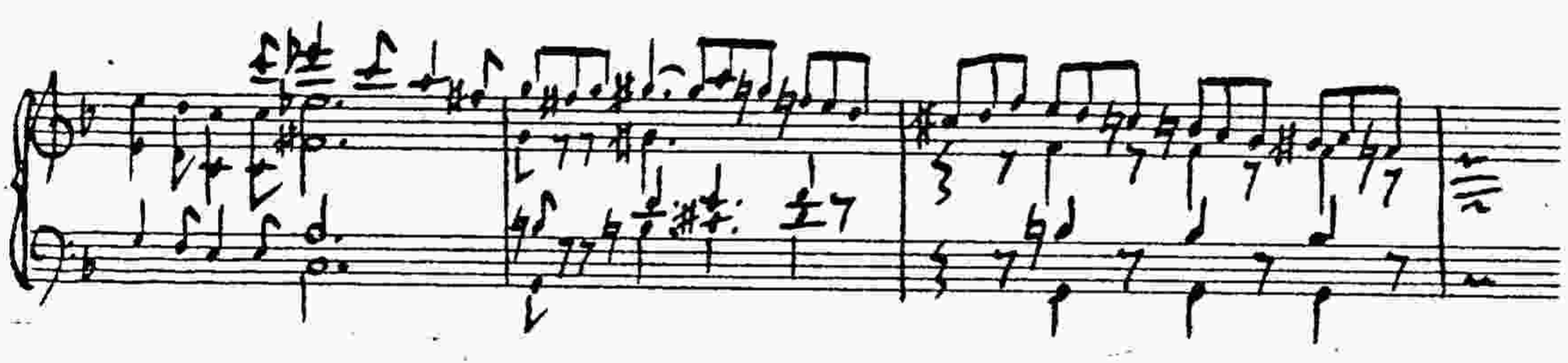


b) ibid



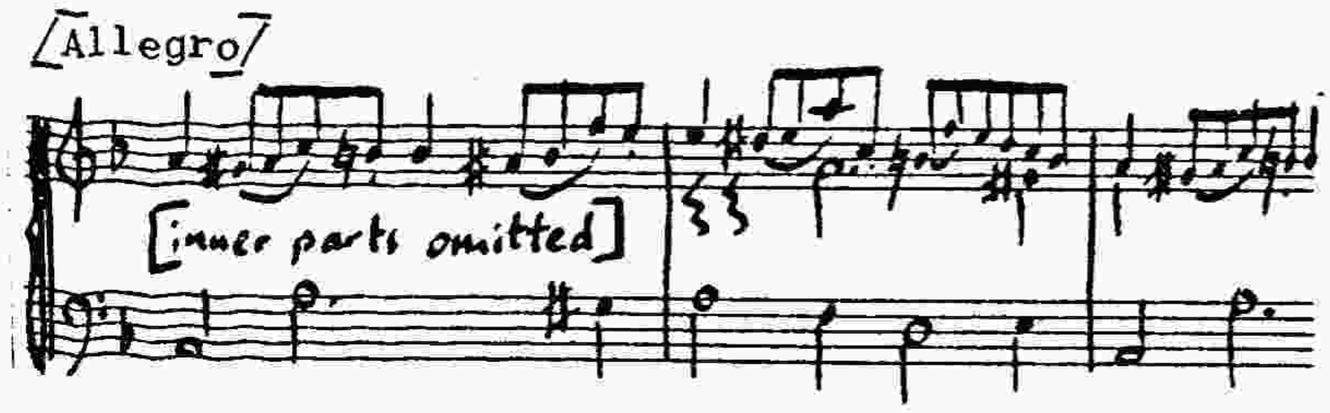
c) ibid
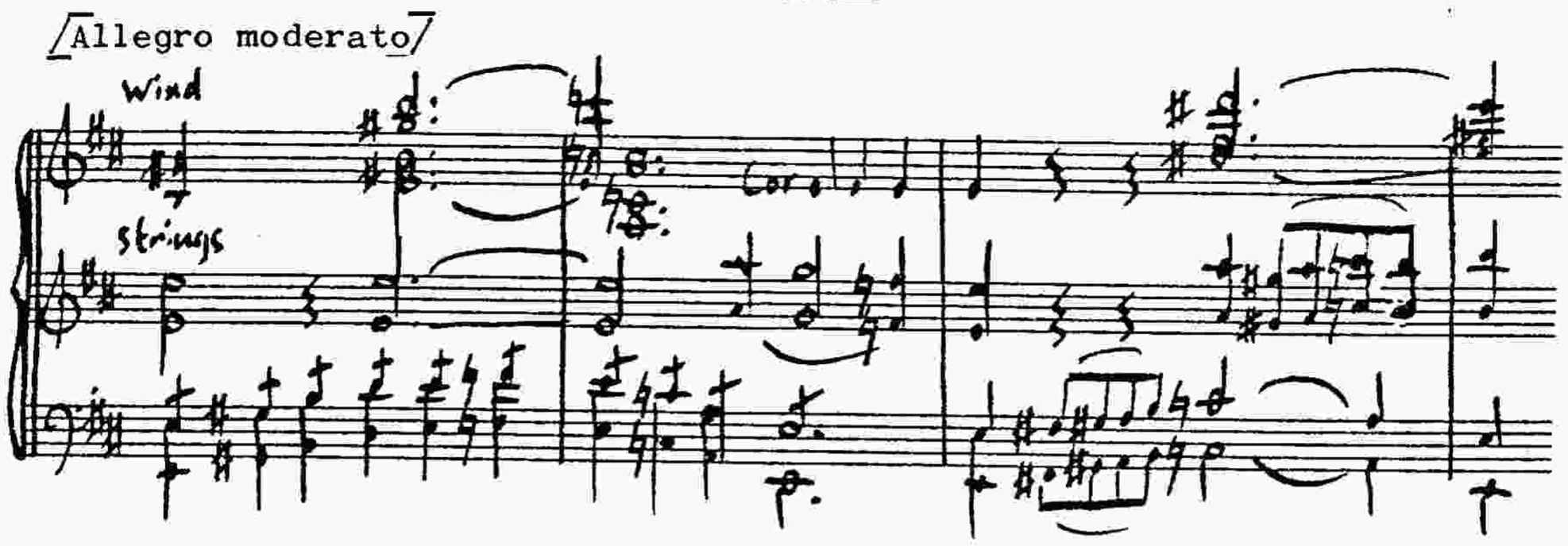




Spohrisms are perhaps even more pronounced in the slightly earlier Naiades overture (1836). It may be significant that Bennett chose the rather unusual time signature of 6/4 (as also for his Parisina overture of 1834) and the tonality of D for this overture, which is the same combination as the first movement of Spohr's Second Symphony. Bennett himself frequently asserted his fondness for that symphony; on January 5 1842, during a visit to Kassel, he wrote in his journal: 'Talked a great deal with Spohr about musical matters, about his Symphony in D minor (which I like better than anything of his)'.[21] Indeed, a phrase occurs in the overture which is a pervasive figure in the symphony, as in the following passages:

Ex. 15 a) Spohr, Symphony no. 2
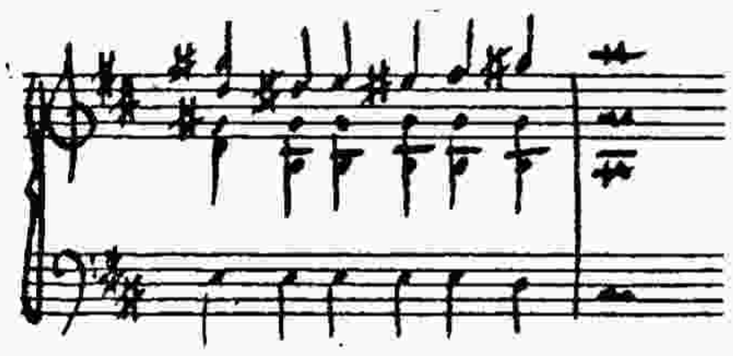


Ex. 15 b) Bennett, Overture The Naiades
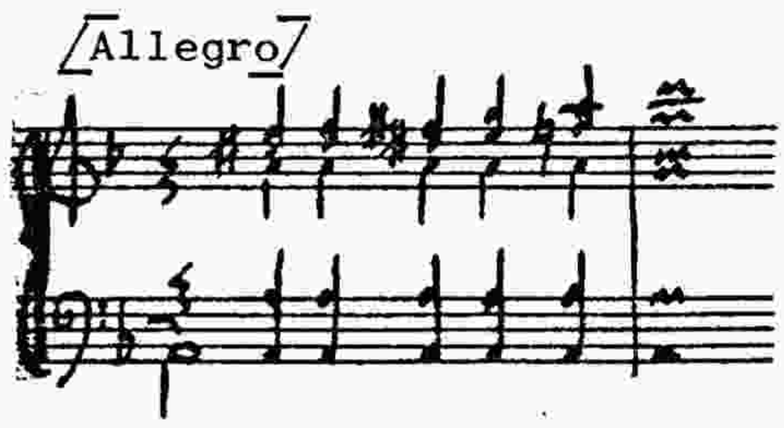


Bennett also made use of a figure which appears in the form of rising scales or arpeggios, occurring at one point in the following chromatic guise, which tallies closely with another prominent phrase in the Spohr.

Ex. 16 a) Bennett, Overture The Naiades

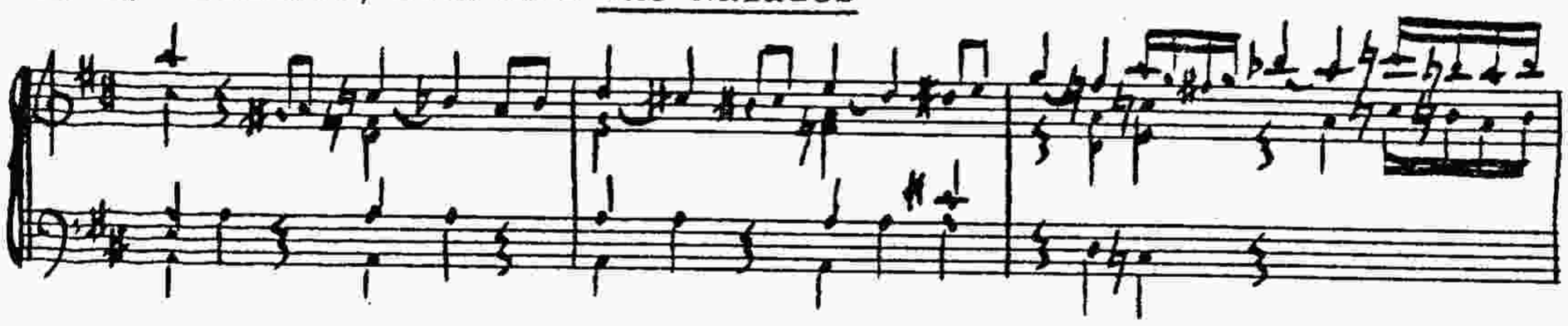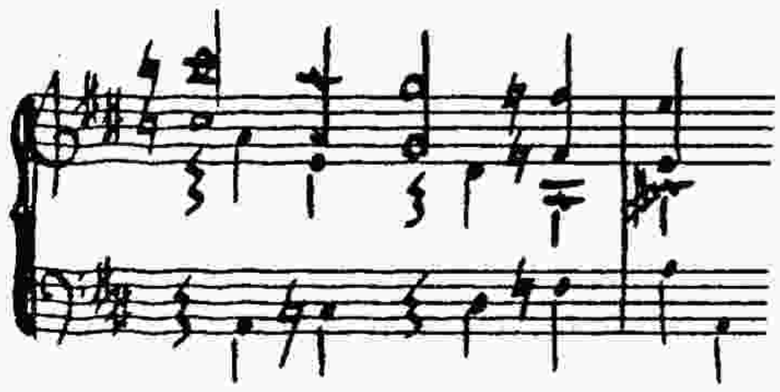


b) Spohr, Symphony no. 2



Another passage in the overture which suggests Spohr's influence is the following.

Ex. 17 Bennett, Overture The Naiades



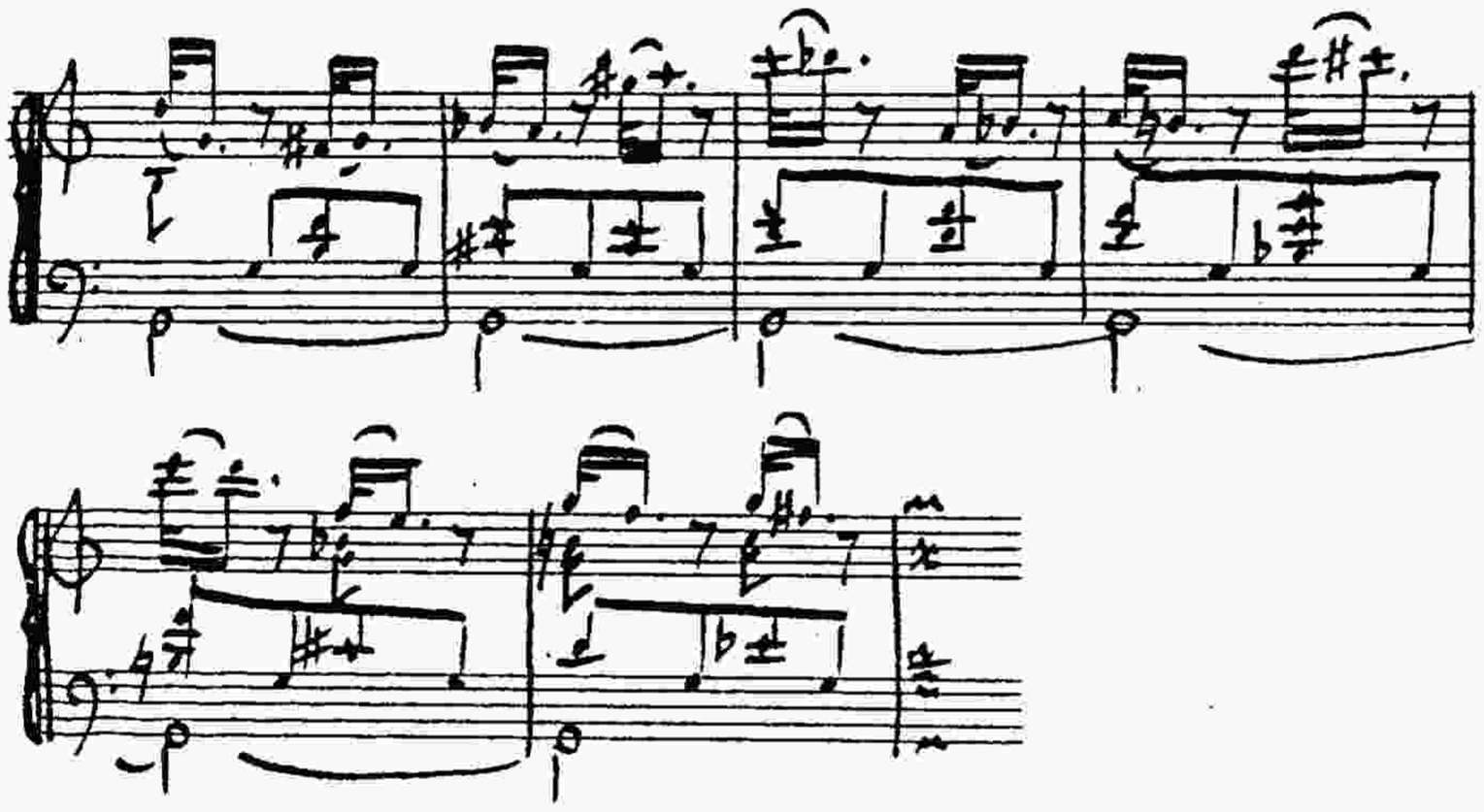


The orchestration, too, bears a remarkable resemblance to Spohr's in the use of the wind and the independent use of 'celli and basses, particularly pizzicato basses with arco 'celli. His admiration for Spohr's orchestration is attested by his son.[22]

Obvious signs of Spohr's influence are much more difficult to find in Bennett's later works; in the Fantasy Overture Paradise and the Peri (1862), for instance, his kinship with Mendelssohn is clearly predominant, and the same is true of the majority of his later compositions. Whatever had derived from Spohr in Bennett's style was increasingly assimilated by the force of his own musical personality, though it is still possible in The May Queen (1858) to imagine that such passages as the following owed something to Spohr's example.

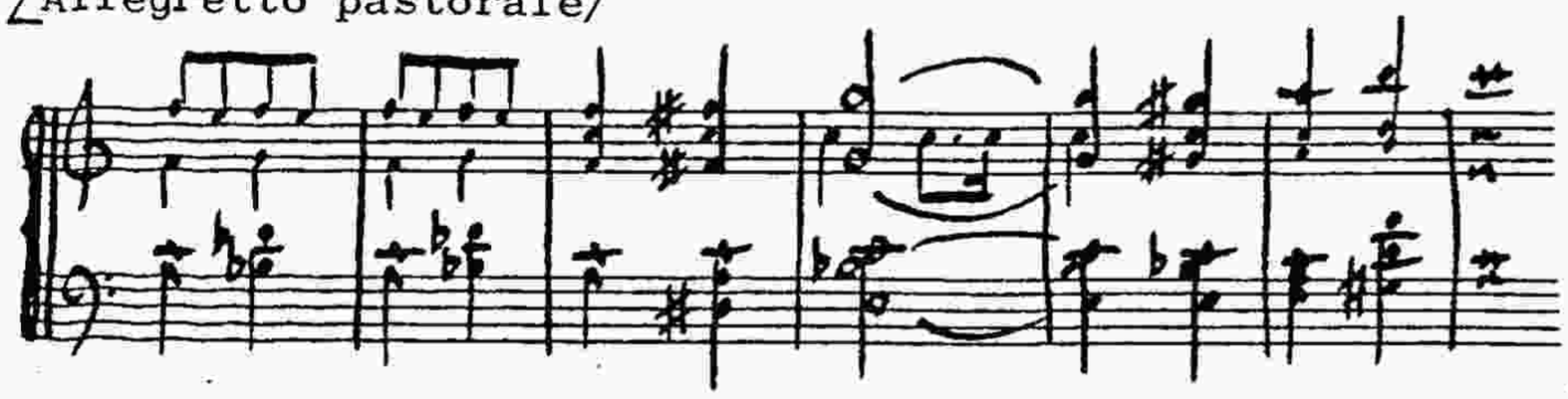
Ex. 18 a) Bennett, The May Queen, no. 1

/Allegretto pastorale/



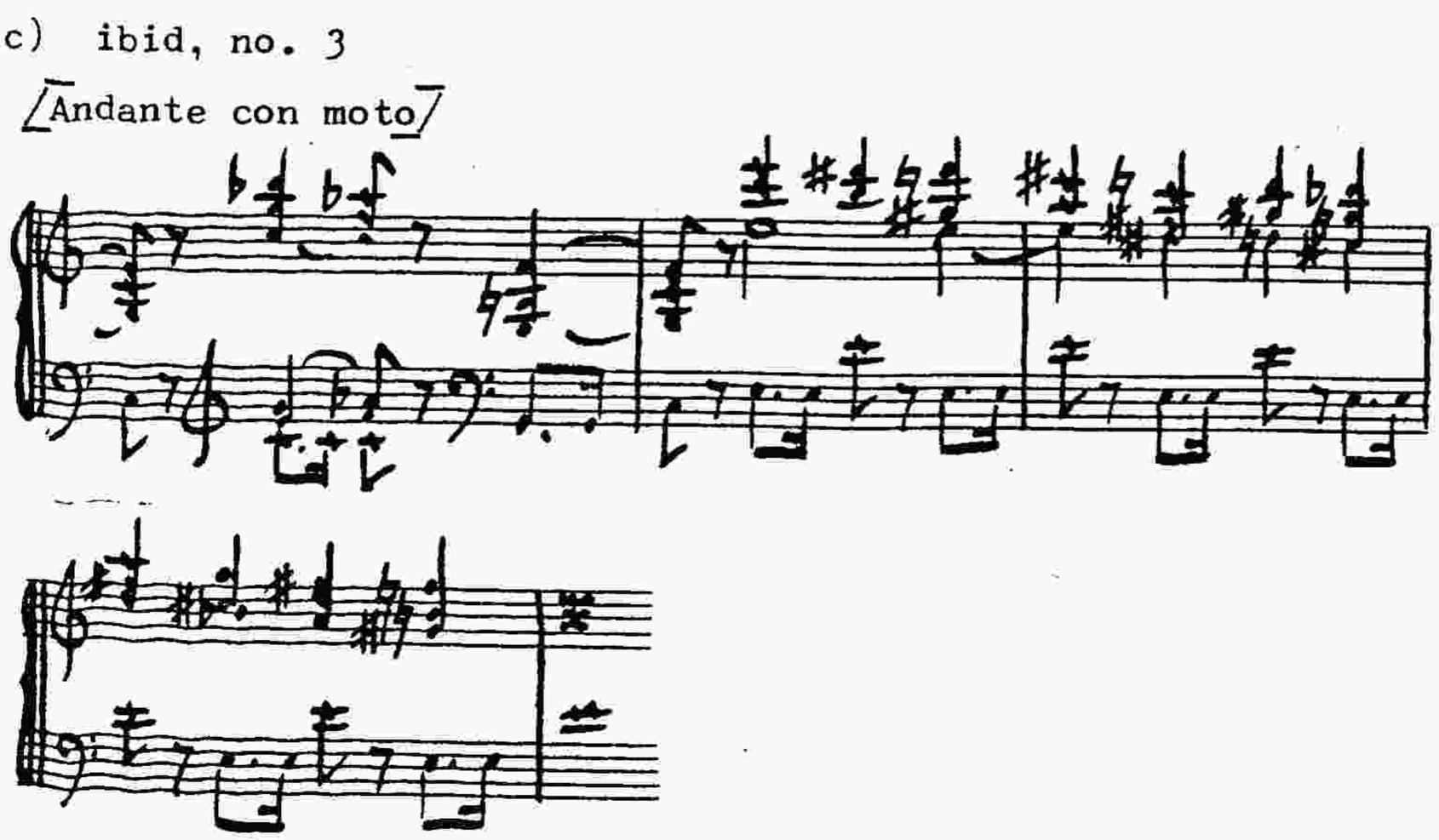
b) ibid, no. 10

/Allegretto pastorale/



c) ibid, no. 3

/Andante con moto/



G.A. Macfarren (1813 - 1887) was closely connected with Smart, Bennett and Davison during the mid 1830's and like them succumbed to the attractions of Spohr's music. Several reviewers from that period detected its influence on his music. The Musical Magazine observed after a performance of his scena 'Azo's condemnation of Hugo' at the Society of British Musicians in 1835:
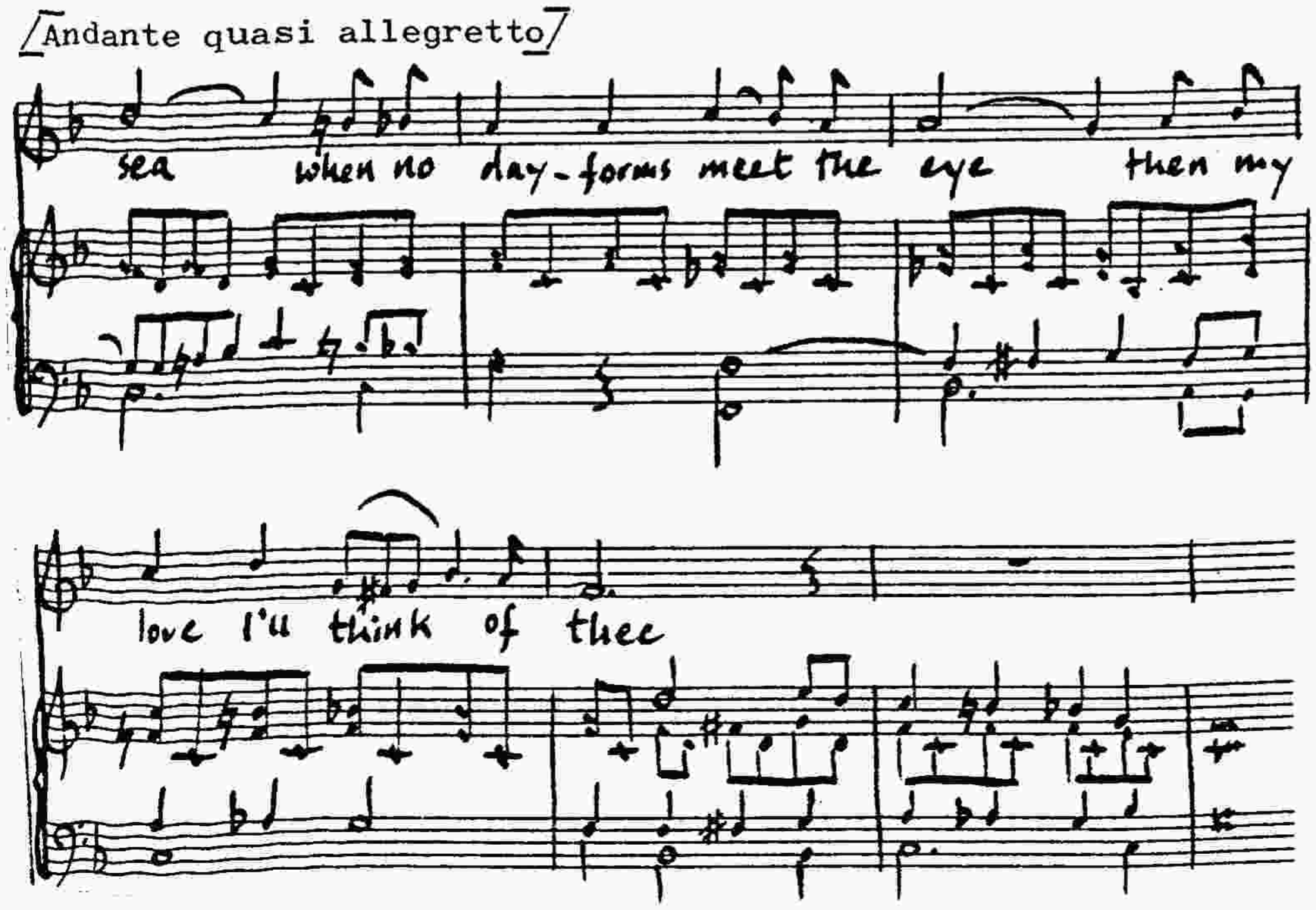
> This composer no doubt is a great admirer of Spohr, as in many parts of his composition traces of that great composer's style are very visible.[23]

In the same journal it was remarked of his overture The Merchant of Venice, that it was 'full of beauty and enthusiasm, but replete with reminiscences of Spohr'.[24] And in a review of his symphony in F minor, where the Andante was especially singled out as being indebted to Spohr, the critic commented:

> let us recommend Mr. Macfarren to turn from the illusive though fascinating school of Spohr, and direct his attention to the chaster and more dignified school of Mozart. Spohr is a master-genius who has chalked out a path for himself that none but himself can walk without danger; and youthful writers, in following his gigantic but phantasmagorical strides, will find themselves at every step engulfed in insurmountable difficulties.[25]

A good example of Macfarren's early tendency to reproduce some of Spohr's traits in his own music is his song 'When the stars are in the sky', for which his friend Davison had provided the words.

Ex. 19 Macfarren, 'When the stars are in the sky'



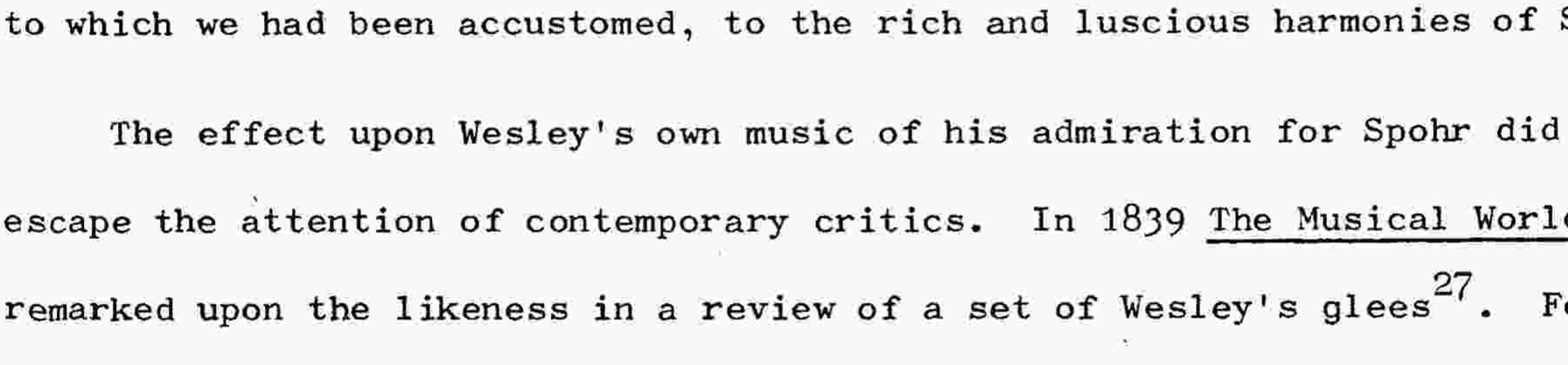
This song was probably written in the mid 1830's, but comparison with works from the mid 1840's and later indicate that Macfarren had heeded the critic's warning and turned his back on such obvious imitation of Spohr. Already in his Second Symphony in C sharp minor, dedicated to Mendelssohn, Spohr's influence had ceased to be apparent in any clearly perceptible form; indeed his assiduous avoidance of the kind of chromaticism typified by the song referred to above is a striking feature of that work. In his later compositions Macfarren tended to use chromaticism for its dramatic impact rather than as an essential colouring.

S.S. Wesley (1810 - 1876)

Wesley was much more profoundly and lastingly influenced than Macfarren by Spohr's music. The impact that it made upon him as a young man is unquestionable. William Spark, who was a choirboy and later Wesley's organ pupil at Exeter in the 1830's, recalled that 'Dr. Wesley came to Exeter in 1835 full of Spohr like all the musicians of the day',[26] and remembered that his arrival resulted in 'a change from the old diatonic ecclesiastical music, to which we had been accustomed, to the rich and luscious harmonies of Spohr'.
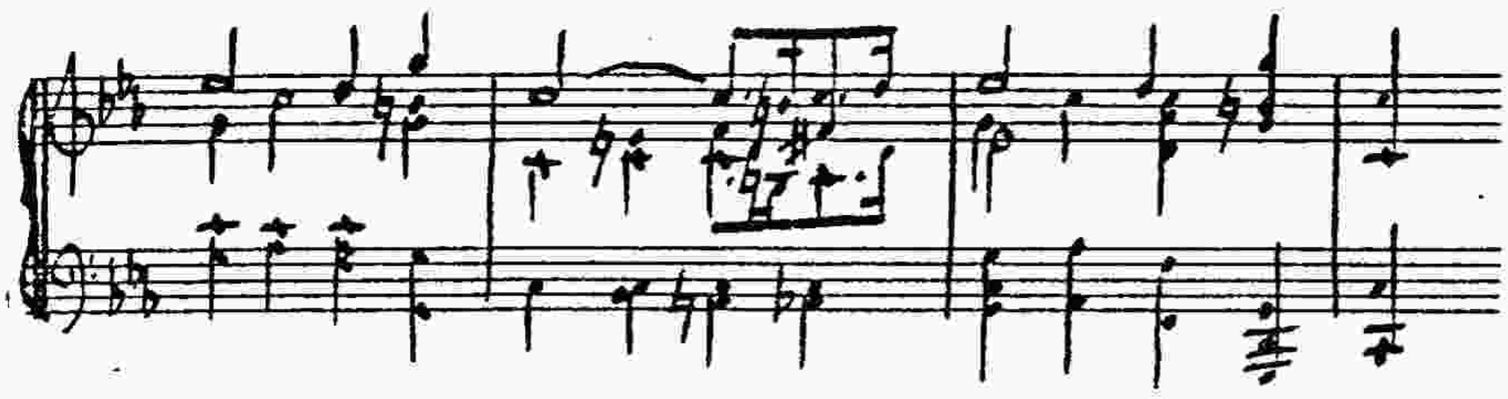
The effect upon Wesley's own music of his admiration for Spohr did not escape the attention of contemporary critics. In 1839 The Musical World remarked upon the likeness in a review of a set of Wesley's glees[27]. Four years later The Musical Examiner, reviewing his March and Rondo, observed that 'The march is a poor imitation of Spohr'.[28] In fact, the march seems like an amalgam of features from several of Spohr's well known march-like movements, such as those from Die Weihe der Töne, Jessonda and the Notturno op.34.

Ex. 20 Wesley, March and Rondo
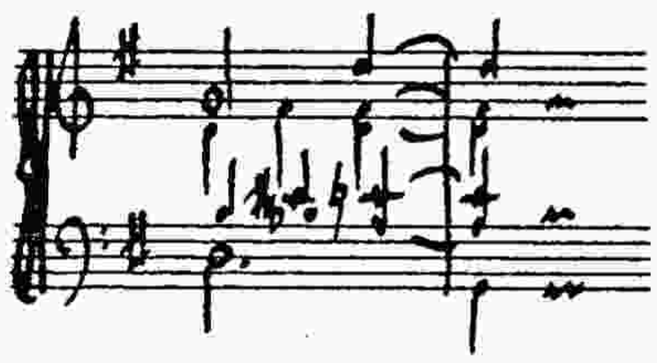


Cont...

Ex. 20 Cont.
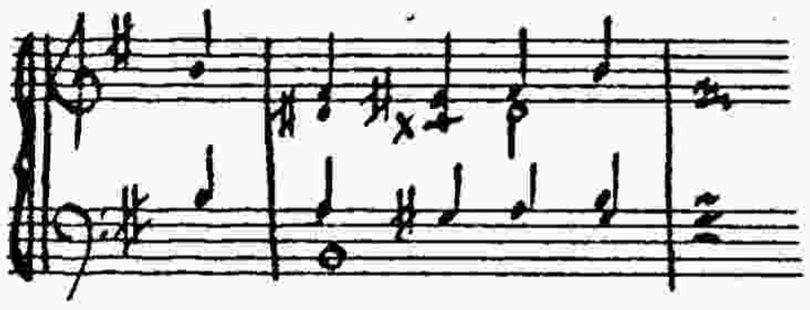


Examples of Spohrishness in Wesley's music from the 1830's are easy to find; indeed his works from that period are saturated with them. The following types of chromatic cadence are almost ubiquitous.

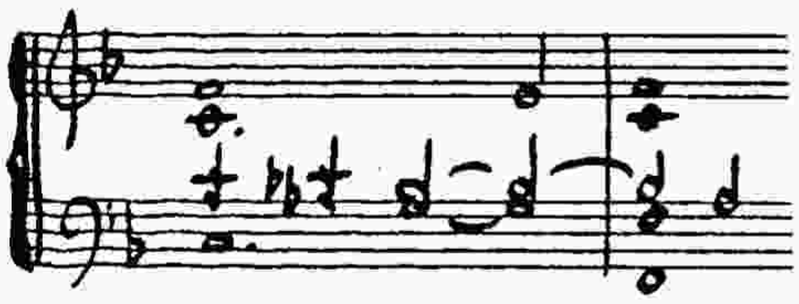
Ex. 21 a) Wesley, Piano piece in e min /~~1834~~, from Mrs. Wesley's MS book, R.C.M., MS 4038/



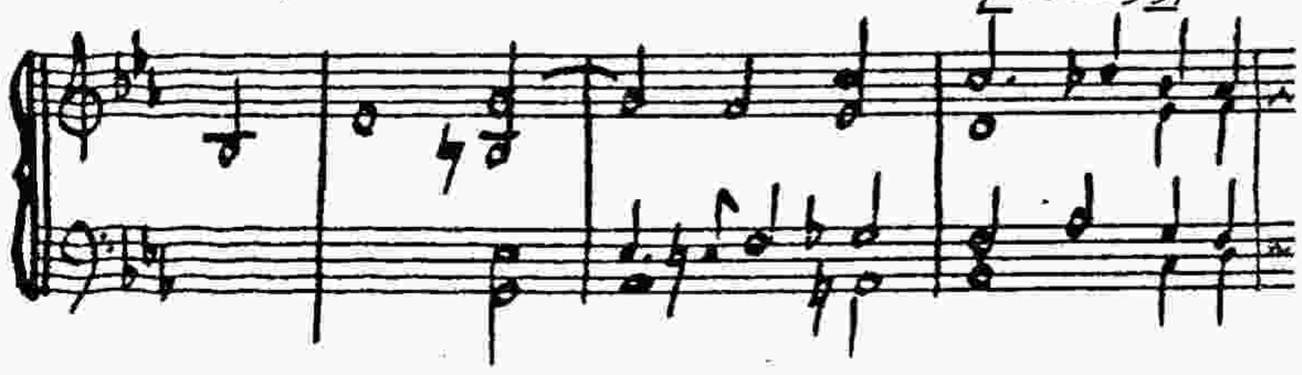
b) ibid



c) Wesley, A Selection of Psalm Tunes, 'Irish' interlude
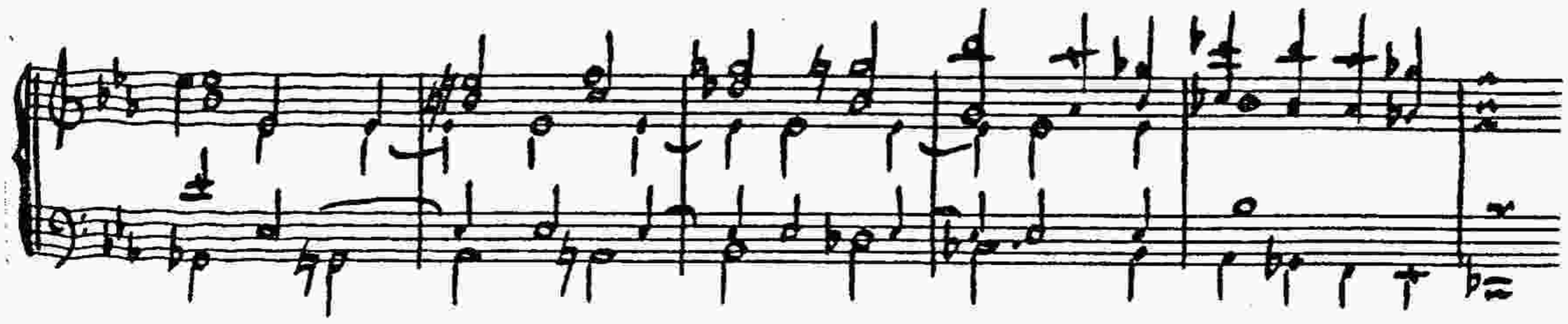


d) Wesley, 'Blessed are the dead' /~~c.1835~~/
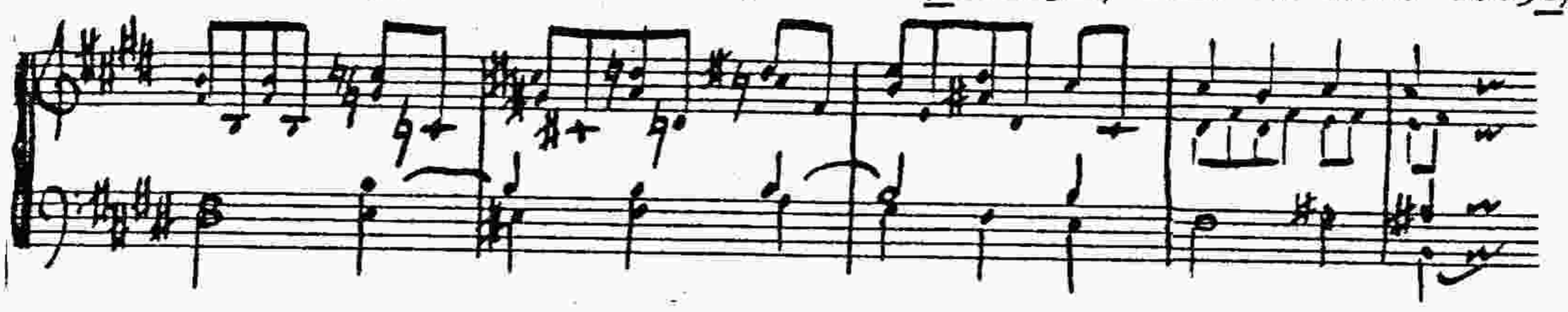


Other examples of chromatic passages which correspond closely with Spohr abound in works written at this time, such as the following.

Ex. 22 a) Wesley, Abraham's Offering /~~c.1834~~, R.C.M., MS 4030/
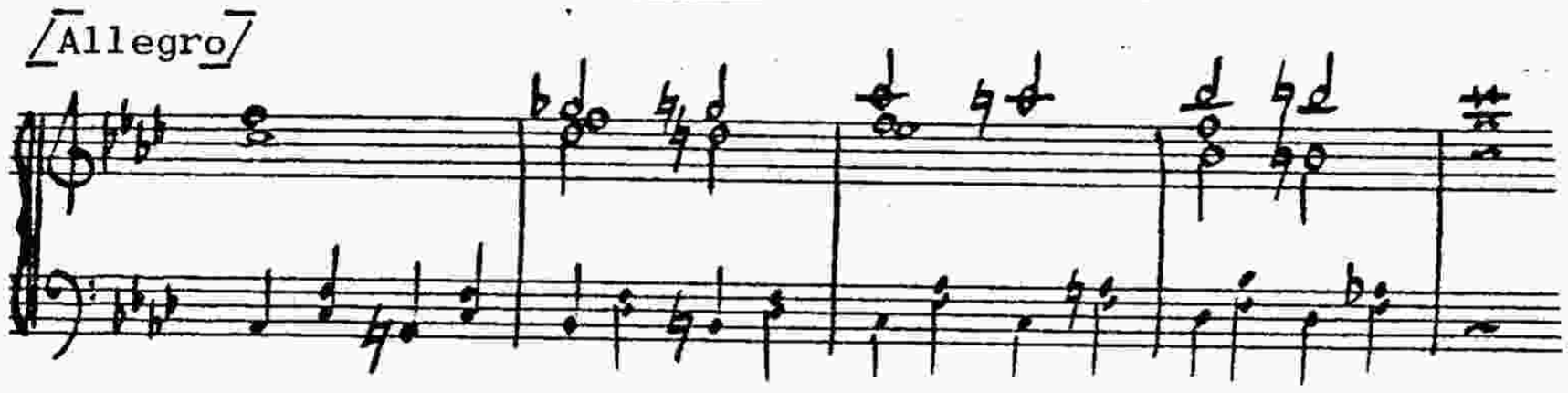


Ex. 22 b) Wesley, 'When we two parted' [c.1832, B.L. MS Add. 40636]
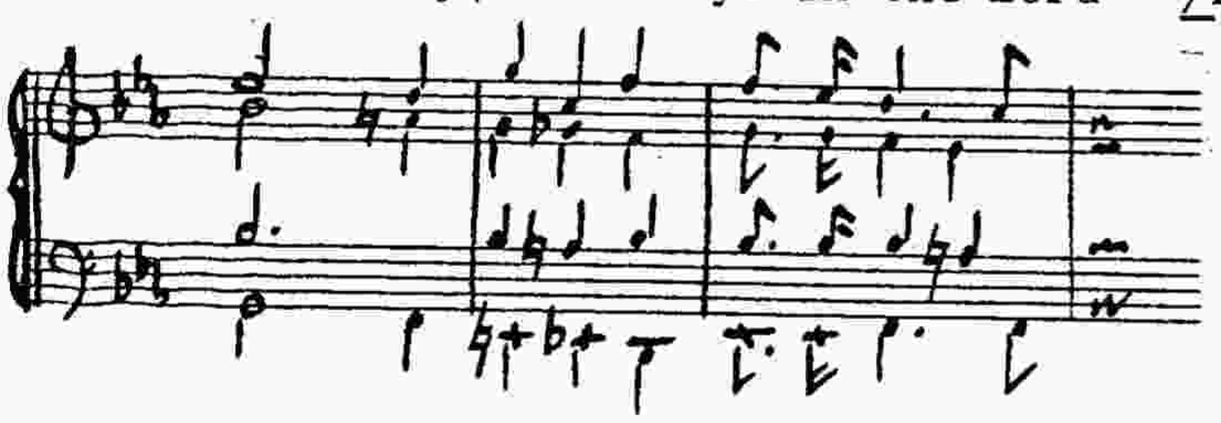


The similarity of these passages to the following bars from Spohr's Azor and Zemira is probably not coincidental, since Wesley had a particularly strong affection for that work, of which he gave a concert version at the Three Choirs Festival of 1834, just before relinquishing his tenure as organist at Hereford.

Ex. 23 Spohr, Azor and Zemira, 'Cease here my fears'

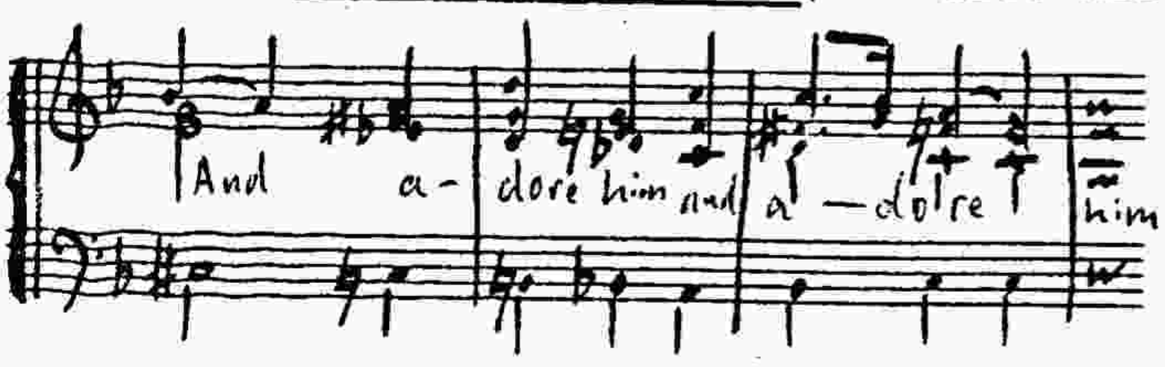


Wesley's admiration seems to have gone so far at this time that he almost exactly reproduced complete musical phrases from his model on several occasions, as in these examples.

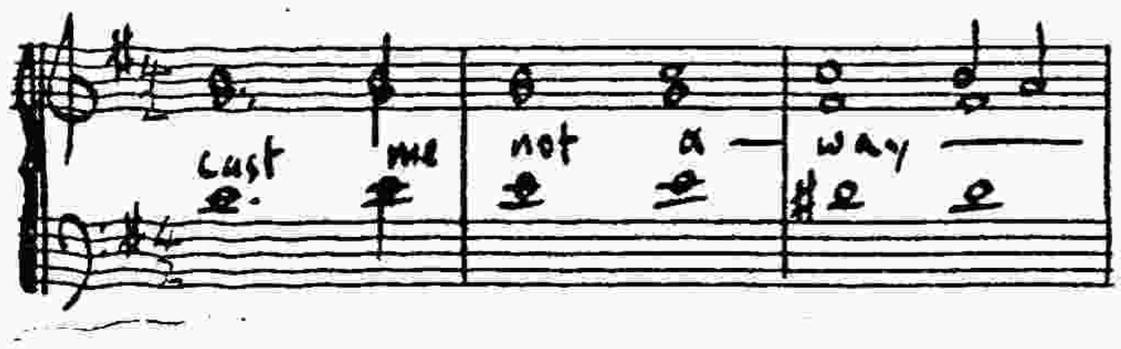
Ex. 24 a) Wesley, 'Trust ye in the Lord' [R.C.M., MS4030]



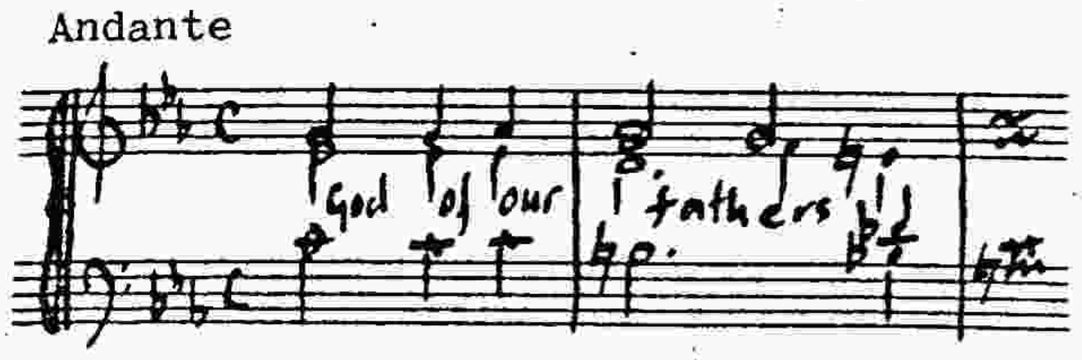
b) Spohr, The Last Judgement, 'Praise his awful name'



Ex. 25 a) Wesley, 'Cast me not away' [1848]
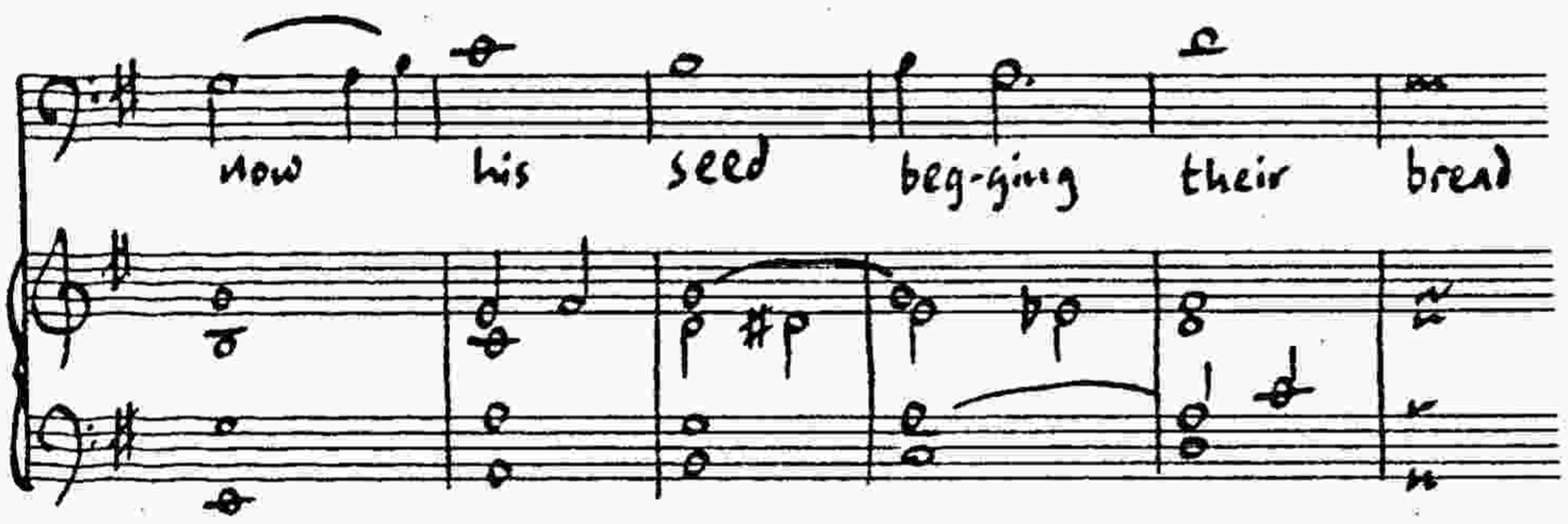


Ex. 25 b) Spohr, The Fall of Babylon, no. 1



Unlike many of his contemporaries Wesley never entirely lost the palpable influence of Spohr in his music; though perhaps he may have felt that he had been a little too lavish in sprinkling his music with chromatic cadences, for in the second edition of his Selection of Psalm Tunes (1842) some of the chromaticism was toned down. However, many Spohrish features were allowed to survive the revision. The continuing attraction of these features can be seen in his works from a much later period. The Sacred Song for bass solo and orchestra 'I have been young', for instance, corresponds closely to Spohr in the opening tutti and Wesley does not shy away from employing one of the most characteristic of Spohr's cadences in a later section.

Ex. 26 Wesley, Sacred Song 'I have been young' [c.1850]



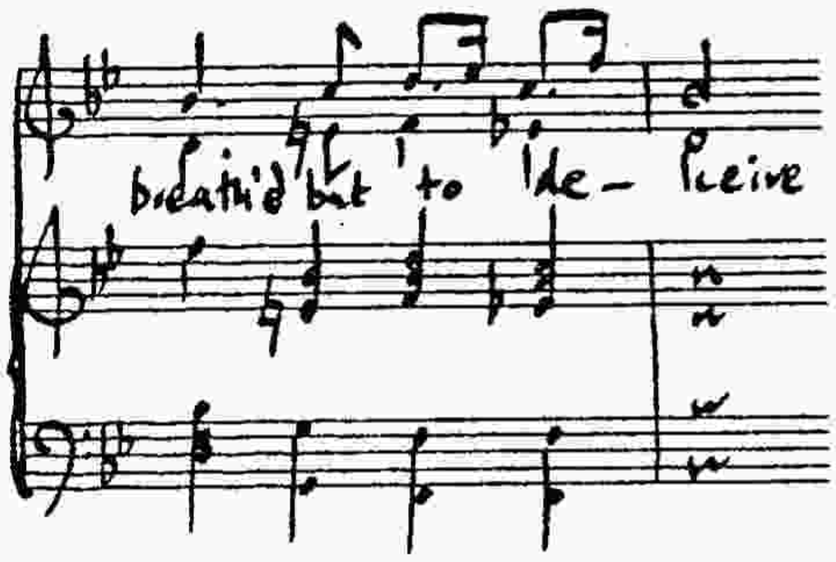
In this piece there are also reminiscences of Mendelssohn, as well as sections which bear little connection with either of these composers. But the general impression of Wesley's music is that he stood in much the same relationship to Spohr as Bennett did to Mendelssohn; that is, both Wesley and Bennett were highly gifted and endowed with distinct musical personalities of their own, but while Bennett's natural inclinations drew him towards a predominantly Mendelssohnian idiom coloured here and there by his appreciation of Spohr, Wesley's affinities with these two composers' styles were in inverse proportion.

Among less prominent English composers there appear to have been few who did not succumb to the attractions of Spohr's music to some extent during the
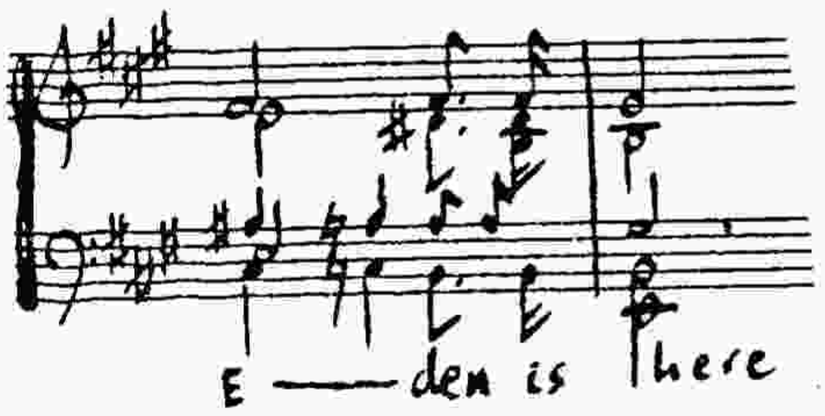
1830's. Some of those in whose works the critics detected Spohr's influence, or whose music gives direct evidence of its impact, may be briefly mentioned.

Edward J. Loder (1813 - 1865) wrote a considerable amount of vocal music including several English operas. His music gives unmistakable signs of Spohr's influence in harmony, in the shape of his melodies and in cadential figures. Perhaps because he had a less distinctive musical personality than some of his more distinguished colleagues, Loder does not seem to have outgrown the stylistic characteristics which he developed in the 1830's. Some examples of Spohrishness from different stages of his output are illustrated.
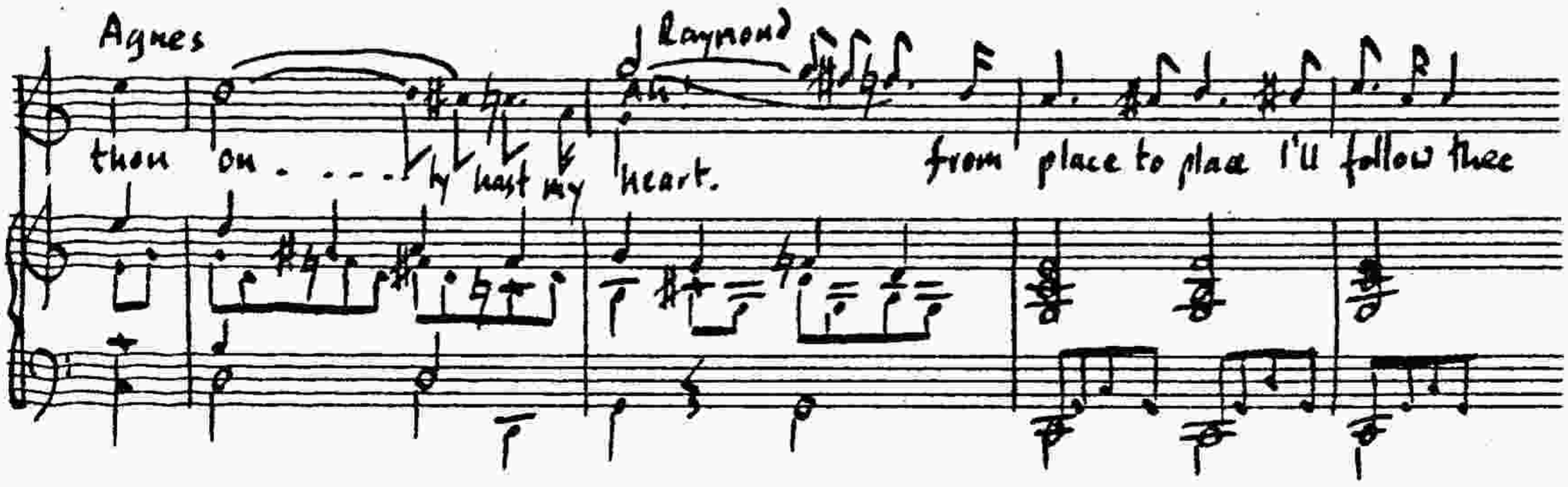
Ex. 27 a) Loder, Francis the First, 'Mayst thou trust me' [c.1838]



b) Loder, The Night Dancers, 'A noble train' [1846]
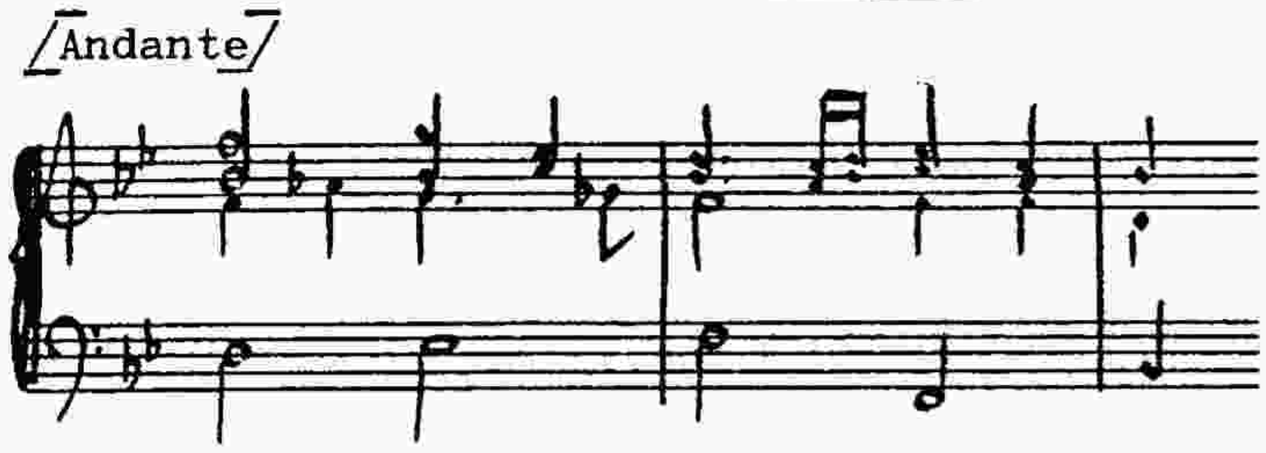


c) Loder, Raymond and Agnes, 'Alas my guardian' [1858]
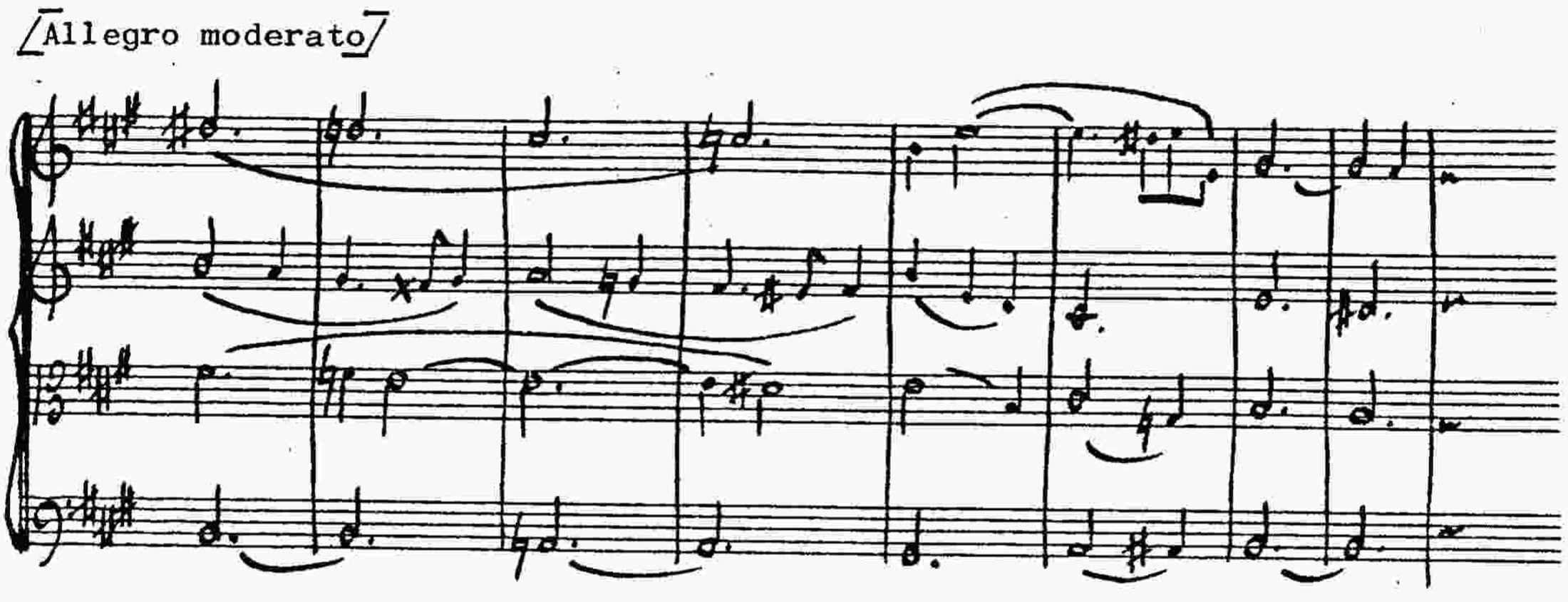


John Lodge Ellerton (1801 - 1873), an amateur composer of some 43 string quartets, six symphonies, operas, an oratorio and many other works, clearly based his style on classical models; on June 29 1838 The Morning

Chronicle had commented of his opera Dominica (performed anonymously) 'It belongs to the school of Mozart'. But he was not free from the lure of Spohr's chromaticism, as is illustrated by the following examples.

Ex. 28 a) Ellerton, Paradise Lost, 'These are thy glorious works'



b) Ellerton, String Quartet op.61 no. 1
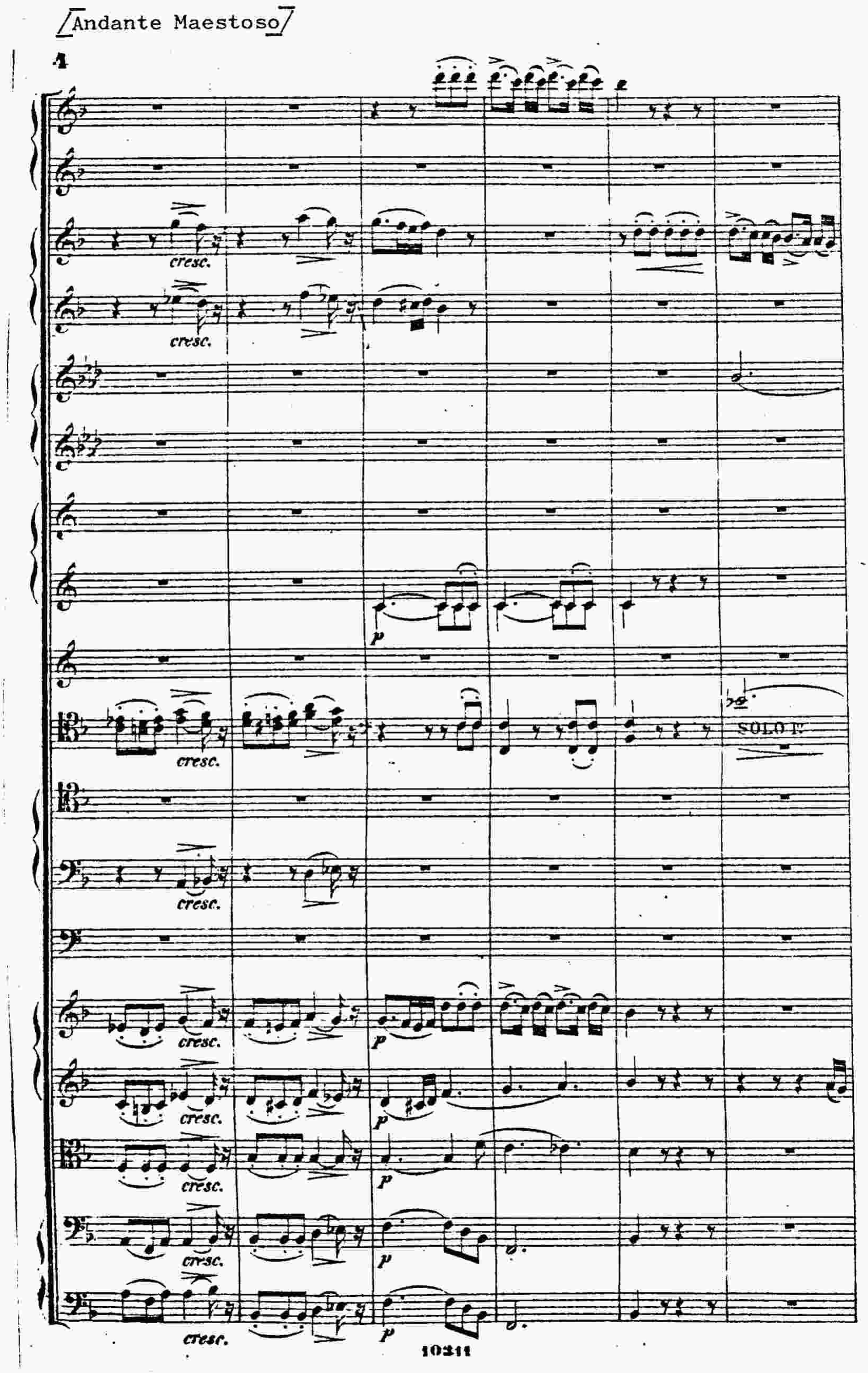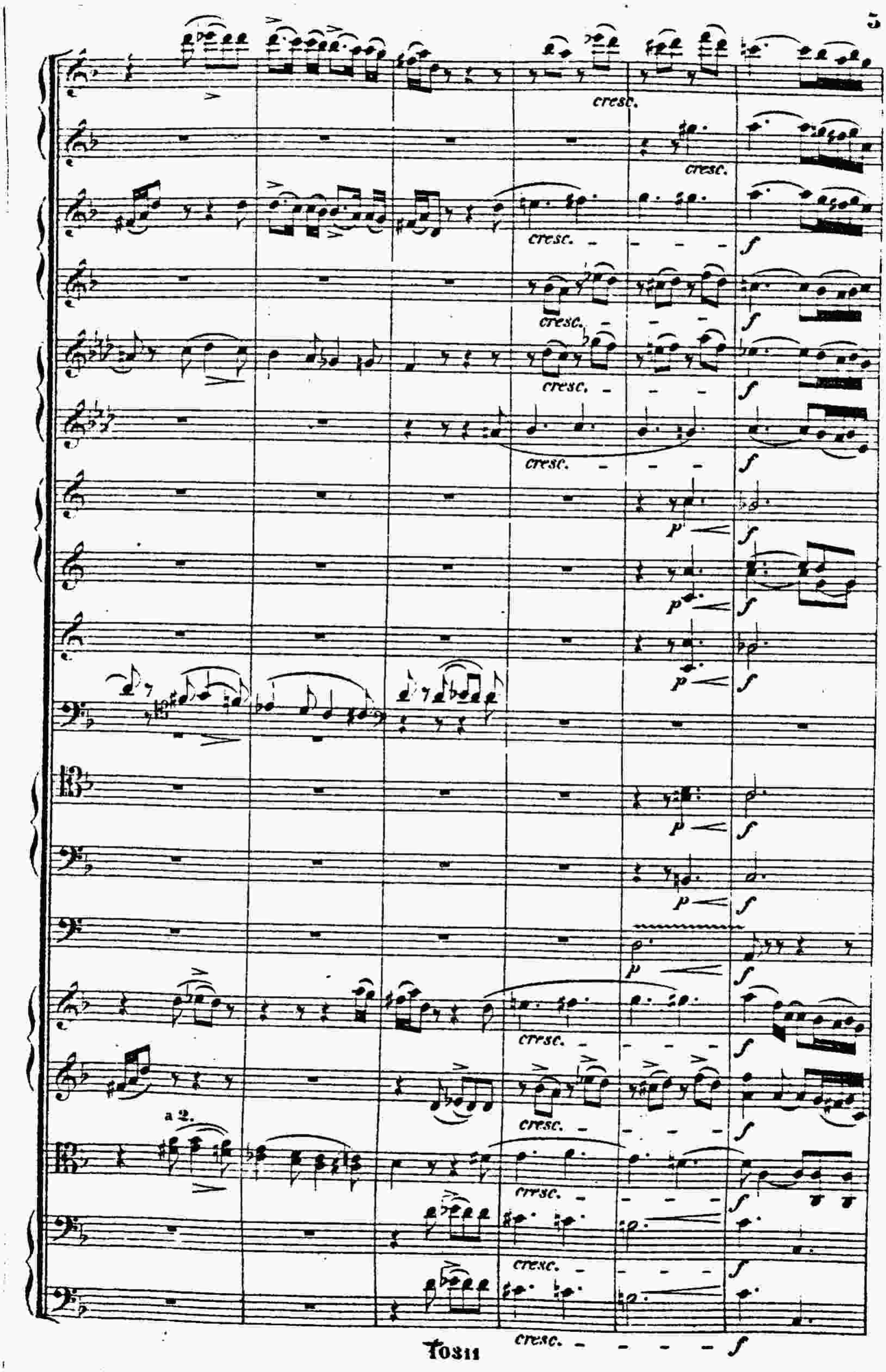


(See pp 315-6 for Ex. 28 c).

Ellerton's string quartets are suffused with examples of rhythmic, melodic and harmonic procedures which show a thorough acquaintance with Spohr's works. They differ from Spohr's quartets, however, in several respects; most notably in the avoidance of passages of virtuoso display for the first violin, for Ellerton maintains an equal balance of interest between the four instruments; also he indulges in key relationships between movements which are not at all typical of Spohr: Spohr might begin a finale in the tonic minor and end in the major, but would not, as Ellerton does in op.61 no. 3 and op.122 no. 1 begin his last movement in the relative minor and end in the major.

Edwin J. Nielson (1812 - ?), one of the Royal Academy of Music's first students, produced an output much less substantial than Ellerton; it consisted mainly of songs written and published during the 1830's and 1840's. His earliest traceable piece, a Bagatelle for piano. published in The Harmonicon

Ex. 28 c) Ellerton, Symphony no. 3 Wald-Symphonie




cresc.
a 2.
Tosti
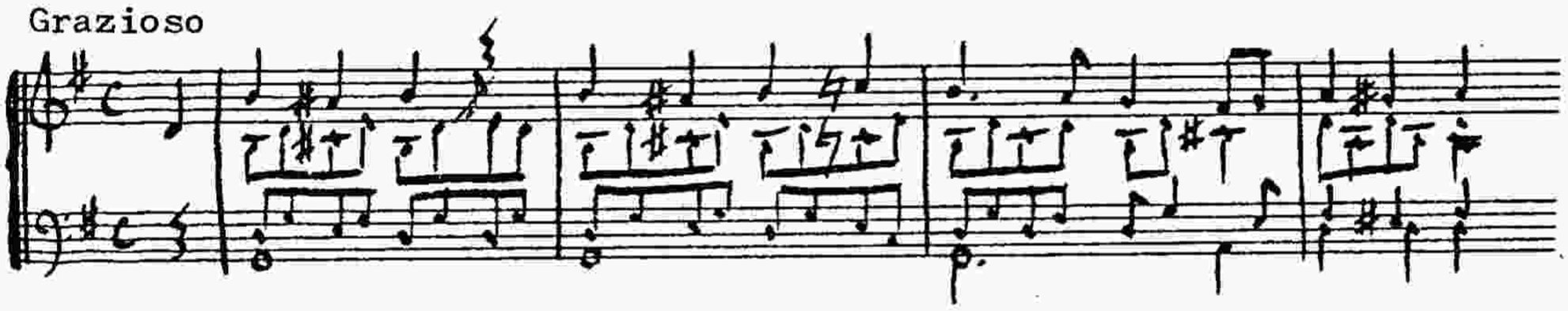
in 1830, already shows a leaning towards chromaticism. In the songs written during the next few years his harmonic and melodic idiom is unmistakably indebted to Spohr. A review of his song 'The Wandering Wind', in The Musical World in 1836, observed that:

> The phraseology and harmonies remind us of Spohr - not that we object to the reminiscence of such a master; for in our opinion Mr. Nielson cannot select a finer model among the modern composers.[30]

And in 1842, reviewing another of his songs, the same journal commented that it contained 'very pretty little bits à la Spohr'.[31]

The following extract from another of Nielson's songs 'Oh take not the rose', is a typical example of his style, indicating some of the features which are undoubtedly a justification for the reviewers' comments.

Ex. 29 Nielson, 'Oh take not the rose'



Another composer whose output was very limited, both in quantity and importance, in whose music Spohr's influence was detected, was Edwin Merriott (? - ?). In 1836 The Musical World, reviewing one of his glees 'The young bride's tomb', remarked:

> Herrn Spohr and Weber are the bankers upon whom Mr Merriott has drawn somewhat liberally for his serious glee: upon the former for his harmonies, and upon the latter for his subjects.[32]

Charles Edward Stephens (1821 - 1892) was a worthy and respected, but by no means prominent composer. His affiliations were with the serious band of musicians who looked to Germany for their inspiration, and as a member of the Society of British Musicians he attempted chamber music during the 1840's. In 1844 a String Quartet in F performed at one of the society's meetings was described as having a 'motivo...somewhat Spohr-ish'.[32] His dedication of a piano trio to Spohr at about this time is an indication of his admiration.

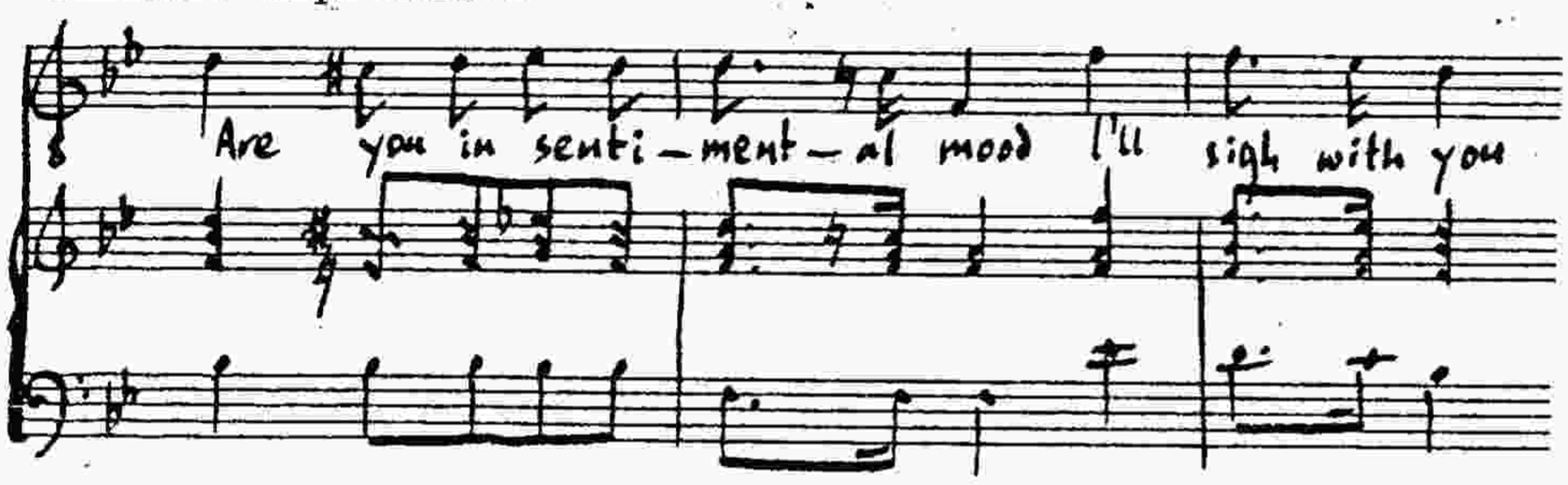
Undoubtedly there were many other minor composers during the 1830's and 1840's in whose music Spohr's influence was apparent to contemporaries, and it is quite clear that notwithstanding Weber's popularity and the growing fascination which Mendelssohn's music began to exert, Spohr was seen by most critics as the dominant influence on young composers at this time, whether for good or ill. After the mid 1840's, however, it becomes much more difficult to point to features in a composer's music which can confidently be cited as specifically attributable to Spohr, and few contemporary criticisms are found after than date in which stylistic elements in English composition are ascribed to Spohr. In the work of serious composers the temporary infatuation which had induced blatant imitation faded; new influences, principally that of Mendelssohn, were exerted and the lessons that had been learned from Spohr were assimilated into the general musical language of the period. Nevertheless it seems clear that Spohr was among the significant influences which helped to form the style of many late nineteenth-century church composers; it is not difficult to see echoes of Spohr in the music of such composers as Sir Joseph Barnby (1838 - 96) and Sir John Stainer (1840 - 1901). Perhaps his most lasting legacy was, unfortunately, to be found in the unctuous chromaticism of so much mid to late nineteenth-century parlour music: Sterndale Bennett had angrily maintained that the English wronged Spohr because they had 'only admired his defects';[34] this may have been one of the things he had in mind. Certainly there is a tendency towards sentimentality in Spohr which was fastened onto and cheapened by some of his less talented successors. Even late into the century it is not fanciful to see the employment of this type of musical expression as a direct consequence of his influence. As late as 1867 Henry Wylde testified to the cheapening of Spohr's idiom which continued to be apparent in the work of less admirable composers, saying:

> Spohr, Mendelssohn, Schubert and others of the French and German Schools...have been so mercilessly despoiled, and so basely imitated, that our music shops and concert rooms are flooded with copies and travesties of their mannerisms.[35]

It is tempting to believe that Sullivan, in The Mikado, deliberately chose to illustrate the words 'Are you in sentimental mood?' in 'A wandering mistrel I' with an almost exact quotation from Spohr, as representing the nearest musical equivalent to sentimentality then in common currency. However, the similarity to the opening of the second movement of Spohr's Concertante op.48 is almost certainly coincidental and the phrase is, in any case, entirely in keeping with Sullivan's own style, thus confirming the strength and persistence of Spohr's influence on his successors.
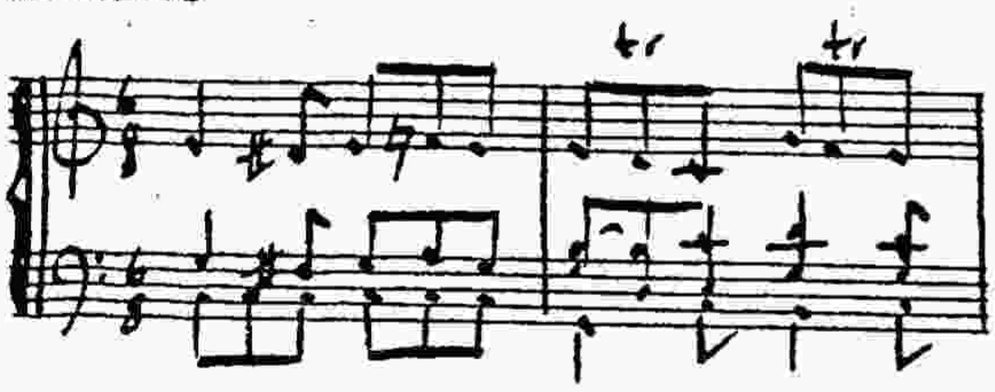
Ex. 30 a) Sullivan, The Mikado, 'A wandering minstrel'

Andante espressivo



b) Spohr, Concertante op.48

Andante



But perhaps Spohr's music was not, during the later part of the century, entirely without effect on serious composers. Diana McVeagh has noted that Spohr was prominent among the influences which helped to form Elgar's style and has demonstrated clear parallels between The Last Judgement (which was still regularly performed at the Three Choirs Festivals during Elgar's youth) and The Apostles[36]. It seems clear that even in the 1870's and 1880's, some young musicians were not free from the lure of certain aspects of Spohr's idiom. Davison had, in retrospect, seen him as 'the founder of a new feeling if not of a new school in music';[37] and there can be no doubt that, despite the supervention of subsequent influences, this feeling continued to dominate English music long after Spohr's own music had ceased to be a primary source

of inspiration for most musicians. It is only through awareness of Spohr's pervading influence during the second quarter of the nineteenth century that many of the characteristics of English music in the succeeding half century become intelligible.

Appendix A

Edward Taylor

Taylor's connection with Spohr is of considerable importance in understanding press attitudes towards his music, particularly in the late 1830's and early 1840's.

The Taylors of Norwich possessed considerable local influence, and members of the family served in all the important positions of civic government. Edward Taylor was sheriff of Norwich in 1819 and one of the founders of the Norwich Musical Festival in 1824. In 1825 he removed to London where along with his brother and another partner he set up as a civil engineer. He had been a keen amateur musician, and lack of success in business caused him to take up music professionally in 1827. He became critic of The Spectator in 1829 and combined this with a singing career. In 1830 The Monthly Musical and Literary Journal remarked of his singing in a benefit concert for the widow and children of Mr Gledhill:

> Miss Cramer and Mr E. Taylor sang the duet of Crudel Perché with great feeling and science. Mr. Taylor's voice is of an excellent quality, and the taste with which he sings displays an intimate acquaintance with the science he professes.[1]

This is of particular interest since in 1843 when he had become the butt of much critical animosity The Morning Post claimed that 'as a bass singer he has been rarely known to sing in time, and in tune never'.[2]

In April 1830 The Harmonicon reviewing a Philharmonic concert observed: 'The duet from Spohr's Berggeist /O calma o bella/ is a delightful composition (for the introduction of which we are indebted to Mr. E. Taylor) and augurs a beneficial change in the vocal arrangements of these concerts'.[3] And later in that year Taylor was responsible for the first performance of The Last Judgement in England at the Norwich Festival. His deep admiration for Spohr's

music was beyond question; his nephew P.M. Taylor recalled his own reaction on meeting Spohr, and his uncle's opinion, in 1886, saying: 'When I looked at his stolid German countenance and burly frame, I felt some difficulty in believing him to be a great composer, but my uncle placed Spohr in the first rank of great musical writers'.[4] T.D. Eaton described Taylor's feelings in 1830 and the inception of his friendship with Spohr. He wrote:

> After the performance of 'The Last Judgement,' Mr. Taylor had a strong desire to become personally acquainted with Spohr, and one day getting an invitation from Mendelssohn to visit him and his family, at Dusseldorf on the Rhine, where Spohr then was, the invitation was accepted, and thus Mr. Taylor first became known to the illustrious composer, with whom he formed a friendship which lasted as long as they both lived.[5]

The part which Taylor played in introducing Spohr's oratorios to England and his partisanship for his music in The Spectator are made abundantly clear in chapters 2-5 above. In order to understand the animosity which he aroused among other journalists, however, it is necessary to take a more general view of his career after 1830. In 1837 the professorship of music at Gresham College became vacant and Taylor was appointed to fill the post despite the candidature of several distinguished musicians. It was widely felt that he had obtained the appointment by influence rather than by merit, since his brother was an alderman of the city; The Musical World referred in 1843 to 'indignation at the unmerited exaltation which Professor Taylor has obtained in his profession by means of excessive assumption and officiousness'.[6] At the same time Taylor, who was a notable liberal, had incurred a great deal of political enmity over his advocacy of reform, so there were many, both inside and outside the musical world who would not have been sorry to see him humbled. He had also alienated certain sections of the musical profession by the causes which he advocated and those which he condemned. His special interest apart from Spohr lay in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century church music, Italian and English madrigals and particularly in the music of Henry Purcell; these were unfashionable interests at this period. Davison was often scathing

about this sort of music, and Taylor's championship of Purcell was seen as especially pernicious when it was allied to depreciation of Mendelssohn. In 1843 he was accused of deliberately excluding Mendelssohn's St. Paul from the Norwich Festival, and it is undoubtedly true that Taylor ranked both Spohr and Purcell considerably higher than Mendelssohn, for he observed in a letter to T.D. Eaton in 1847;

> the more I know of Purcell the more true do I find Dr. Beckwith's remark to me when, as a boy, I was expressing my admiration of his music, "The longer you live, and the more you will admire him." But what know or care his countrymen about him? Nothing. We are going to put up a statue to Mendelssohn - a foreigner - who had not a tithe of Purcell's genius, but the English Orpheus is forgotten.[7]

However, perhaps Taylor's mortal sin in the eyes of the rising generation of music critics was his apparent lack of sympathy for the efforts of young English composers. This, combined with all the other grounds for enmity, made him a prime target for the spleen of the group of anti-establishment critics who were centred round Davison. Towards the end of the 1830's attacks from this quarter began to come blatantly into the open. One attack which was only thinly disguised under a veil of sarcasm and irony occurred in a letter to The Musical World in 1839. It is worth quoting at length on account of the light which it sheds not only on the effect of Taylor's championship of Spohr and the grounds upon which Davison's faction founded their antipathy, but also because it reveals some of their attitude towards others of their fellow musicians, particularly those of the older generation. The letter is a curious one since it was clearly written by Davison or by one of his close associates and is thus a triple deception; for The Harmonist was edited by Davison and the review of The Harmonist in The Era, from which a portion was quoted in the letter, was also by Davison. The remarks about Davison and Smart in a footnote to the letter seem merely designed to put the reader off the scent, since it is evident that far from believing the critic of The Era to be 'calumating' the writer was on agreement with him on every point. The letter observed:

> In a criticism on "The Harmonist," alluding to two compositions

by Spohr, which appeared in the last part of that miscellany, the following gross and ridiculous allusion to the highly respected and profoundly theoretical Gresham Professor is made.-

"Spohr is very popular just now, from having been lately exhibited at Norwich, by the erudite Professor Taylor, who with the best feelings (perhaps) for the reputation of his friend, takes, we humbly opine, the very surest method to make him look ridiculous. But every great man, it seems, must have a toady,(!!) upon whom he may practise his jokes, vent his spleen, and exercise his wit; and who, when the great man pronounces "that's fine," must echo with energy "mighty fine!" As Johnson had his Boswell, as Mendelssohn has his Klingermann, as Moscheles has his Ayrton, so we presume, Spohr must have his Taylor."(!!!)

Can anything, Mr. Editor, be imagined more atrociously indecent, more unjustly calumniating, more indefensibly misrepresenting plain matter of fact, than the above quoted paragraph? The holy and respectable alliance between two of the greatest minds in modern Europe, to be designated toadyism!! What?- "is there no virtue extant," is there no gratitude on the face of the globe? Shall the man who has done so much for his species: who has so often effected, by his lectures, that which many of the profoundest professors of Mesmerism have failed to attain; who has proved to us, as an observant and impartial spectator, that there is no such thing as music in England; that Sterndale Bennett owes all his reputation, and the patronage of the Philharmonic to "back-stairs influence,"* being possessed of no talent whatever; that Macfarren is an imposter, and his music, trumpery. Shall the man who has done and proved so much for our edification, be thus exposed to the jeers and unjust insinuations of an obscure musical critic;** a critic who has disgraced himself by an impertinent and wholesale abuse of the sublime music of Thalberg; which gentleman, according to one of your correspondents last week, has a greater musical organization than Mozart***!!- What would follow if such remarks were allowed to go unnoticed, it were impossible to surmise. We shall next have the musical knowledge of Hogarth called into question; or the profundity of Parry; or the orchestral skill of Hullah; or the madrigalian researches of Oliphant; or the genius of Louis Emmanuel; or the modesty of Eliason; or the acuteness of Gruneisen; or the retiredness of Chorley; or the bashfulness of Grattan Cooke: or the horn playing of Hopgood; or the imagination of Rooke; or the counter-point of Romer; or the impartiality of the Philharmonic; or, worse than all, the fugue writing of Doctor Essex!!

I trust therefore, Mr. Editor, that, out of the respect due from every musician to the astute and philosophic personage, Professor Taylor, to say nothing of a reverence for public morals, you will exercise your editorial whip over the literary shoulders of the culumating critic in the Era...

* See Spectator

** The criticisms of this gentleman (Mr. J.W. Davison), and also of the scribbler in "The Atlas," (Mr. Henry Smart), will form the subject of a future letter.

*** Poor Mozart! or rather, poor Thalberg! who may justly call on Heaven to protect him from his friends.[8]

In 1843 Taylor's reputation was severely shaken by the so-called 'madrigal controversy'. This affair centred round a charge of plagiarism which was

levelled at him in respect of a madrigal which he had submitted for a prize offered by the Western Madrigal Society in 1842; his entry had won the prize, but it had then been discovered that a section of some twelve bars was identical to a passage from a madrigal by Marenzio. This was pointed out to Taylor who claimed that he must have sent in the wrong copy. His story was that, on hearing of the competition, he had looked up some old exercises and found one which he thought worthy of entry, but it contained the bars from Marenzio because, as he explained, it had been his practice to work passages from genuine madrigals into his exercises. Before submitting the madrigal, however, he claimed that he had composed a new and entirely original section to replace the borrowed passage and had the madrigal recopied, but that the wrong copy had been sent in error. Why he remained unaware of the error until it was brought to his notice by the committee of the madrigal society was not satisfactorily explained, especially since he had been present when the prize madrigal was sung through by the society. In his defence, however, it is only fair to state that he himself had been the editor of a volume containing the Marenzio madrigal in question which he knew to be in constant use by the society. Whether Taylor had practiced a deliberate deception or not will probably never be known, but to those who sought a stick with which to beat him the circumstantial evidence was quite sufficient to destroy his credibility.

The scandalous implications of this affair removed all restraint from Taylor's critics and a torrent of abuse was loosed onto the head of the 'madrigalian Martyr' as he was derisively called. The Musical World branded him as 'the greatest enemy to rising British musical talent whose unkindly lucubr-iations have ever disgraced the press of England'. (This was a catagory in which Chorley was also placed, for a footnote added: 'Always excepting the ignorant and conceited scribbler of the Athenaeum, who by the intolerable twaddle with which he hebdomadally deluges that print, has brought it into universal contempt among artists.')[9] The Morning Post and The Britannia, were also implacable and in the latter a similar point was made; it claimed: 'it is flagrant that he has, in the Spectator, spared not a British composer, and,

with a pen steeped in gall, attacked alternately John Barnett, Balfe, Rooke, Sterndale Bennett, and Sir George Smart.'[10] This critic had also referred sarcastically to Taylor as 'a clever writer' and The Musical World took up this point saying:

> It is surely a discovery exclusively of the Britannia's that Professor Taylor is a clever writer. The truth is he writes essays about as well as he writes madrigals. Why - we should as soon think of dubbing the musical editor of the Athenaeum (who can scarcely construct an intelligible paragraph) a clever writer - as Mr. Taylor. A clever writer indeed - what next? A clever professor if you please, but a very poor performer of his profession. A clever writer, by no means, unless it be of other men's ideas, ideas - as in the case of Luca Marenzio, with whose praises we are absolutely nauseated - about as poverty stricken as his own.[11]

The Morning Post expanded upon the implications of Taylor's connection with Spohr, commenting:

> Mr. E. Taylor, a very clever amateur, has made a very poor professor. Henry Purcell and Spohr have been his stock in trade - to make the former pass current he burked Handel - to exploiter the latter he has tried to stifle Mendelssohn, and to secure his own ends he has abused everybody save his own clique. To crush the rising talent of England has been his great aim, and unfortunately he did enjoy a prestige to do harm, until the prize madrigal exposure burst upon the public, discovering a mass of unparalleled ignorance, and of daring plagiarism, unprecedented in musical annals, which for the honour of English composers. it is hoped will never occur again. Spohr has paid the penalty of this unfortunate connection, but we acquit him from any participation in the exclusion of Mendelssohn's Paul from the Norwich Festival. The misfortune is, that Spohr's works have been so jobbed in this country.[12]

In May 1843 he resigned his post on The Spectator and despite his continued tenure of the Gresham professorship he effectively ceased to be an important influence in the musical world. It may be worth noting that his innocence was believed in by the editor of The Spectator, who replied to Taylor's letter of resignation expressing obviously sincere regret at his departure, describing his career as 'honourably and usefully distinguished' and observing that 'a selection from your writings in the 'Spectator' ... would comprise a body of the soundest and best musical criticism in the language; and when you retire, I know not that any second man in England is qualified to sustain the elevated standard that you have raised'.[13]

As to whether Spohr's connection with Taylor had any significant effect upon his reputation in the long run, it is virtually impossible to arrive at a firm conclusion. However, there were those, especially among Taylor's friends, who believed that it had. One of these was T.D. Eaton, and though it seems likely that he overstated the case, it is nevertheless important to take account of his view, particularly since it offers an alternative explanation of the reasons for the enmity which Taylor had incurred from so many of his contemporaries. Eaton made no mention in his memoir of Taylor of the madrigal affair, but it may be presumed that he accepted Taylor's innocence in the matter. He wrote:

> But when it began to be discovered that Professor Taylor was not only earnest, but successful, in his endeavours to create a taste for good music in the people; that he constantly held up the noblest examples in his art to their admiration; and that he exposed mediocrity, wherever he found it, however popular it might be, the professional mind became rather uneasy. The worshippers of 'the great goddess Diana' (though of course there were many honourable exceptions) began to be jealous of this new apostle, who had so lately sprung from the ranks of the amateurs. But this was not all. It was found out that the sound and honest criticisms in the Spectator - the best that were published in this country - proceeded from his pen; and moreover that it was not correct for 'a professional man' to 'sit in judgment' upon this musical brethren.' Had Professor Taylor condescended merely to puff 'his musical brethren,' both in and out of season, doubtless the thing would have been deemed 'correct' enough. But he felt it his duty, as Gresham Professor of Music, to instruct the people by all the means in his power - without, as well as within, the walls of his own theatre. He would thus be carrying out the noble intentions of the founder. He thought, too, that the Profession ought to be for the Art, as well as the Art for the Profession. Fatal mistake! 'Continuo venti volvunt mare.' Immediately the sky began to lower. He was not the man to be openly attacked, but his influence might be secretly undermined. Without exactly knowing how, or why, he must have felt a chill and blight around him. The press which had set up Spohr as an idol, now began to damn that illustrious composer with 'faint praise.' The innocent public, who swallow music as they swallow medicine (because it is prescribed for them) without understanding how one or the other is composed, began to find out that the compositions which they had once admired, or at least affected to admire, were 'really somewhat dull.' But thoughtful men, who knew the intrinsic value of Spohr's compositions, remembered that he was the friend of Professor Taylor; and that Taylor had laid the foundation of his fame in this country by bringing out his splendid oratorios at the Norwich Festivals. This of itself was significant, but this was not all. Mendelssohn, a musician of vast learning, indefatigable industry, and consummate skill so far as construction is concerned, at length entered the lists with Spohr as a composer of oratorios. Of Mendelssohn's

> 'Songs without Words,' of his 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and of his pianoforte and some other instrumental compositions, it would be difficult to speak too highly. There are two opinions of his merits as an oratorio writer. His first oratorio, 'St Paul,' can scarcely be called a success. His 'Elijah' was always a favourite with the public, and it contains some good descriptive music; indeed, description was Mendelssohn's strong point. Some of the press, however, not content with giving this oratorio the praise which was its due, affected to consider 'Elijah' inferior indeed to the 'Messiah,' but in such an artful way, that the opposite conclusion might be drawn by the reader. It is not for us to pretend to fathom motives, but it is very remarkable that the efforts first made to elevate Mendelssohn in this new walk were contemporary with those by which it was sought to depreciate Spohr.[14]

Finally it may be noted that none of this seems to have disturbed Taylor's personal relationship with Spohr. On his visit to London in 1847 Spohr again stayed with Taylor at 3, Regent Sq. Kings Cross. However, Taylor's loss of position did mean that he was no longer able to promote Spohr's works so effectively as before, but it seems unlikely that this was really so important a factor in the decline of his popularity as Eaton believed.

Appendix B

Performances of Spohr's Music in England 1820-1858

This appendix lists performances of Spohr's works which it has been possible to trace through reviews or programmes. The majority of these are London performances, though provincial festivals and a few concerts in other large cities which were reviewed in the national papers and musical journals are included. While it has been possible to include all performances of Spohr's music at well documented concerts such as the Philharmonic Society and the Musical Union, there were clearly far more performances than are listed here since many prominent concert series were only reviewed spasmodically and there were a host of minor concerts, particularly from the 1840's onwards, which did not usually merit the attention of the critics.

Asterisks are used to indicate Spohr's participation in a performance either as conductor or violinist.

Where possible the source of vocal pieces from operas and oratorios is identified. The following abbreviations are used:

Operas

F Faust

ZA Zemire und Azor

J Jessonda

B Der Berggeist

PA Pietro von Abano

A Der Alchymist

Sacred Works

LJ The Last Judgement (Die letzten Dinge)

C, Calvary (Des Heilands letzte Stunden)

FB, The Fall of Babylon (Der Falls Babylon)

CP, The Christian's Prayer (Vater Unser)

For the titles of concerts the following abbreviations are employed:

Ch. Con.	Chamber Concert
Class.	Classical
Con.	Concert
Fest.	Festival
Lit. & Sci. Inst.	Literary & Scientific Institution
Phil. Soc.	The Philharmonic Society
R.A.M.	Royal Academy of Music
Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Society of British Musicians.

PERFORMANCES OF SPOHR'S MUSIC IN ENGLAND, 1820-1858

1820		
6/III	Phil. Soc.	*Violin Concerto no. 8
20/III	Phil. Soc.	*String Quartet op.43
22/III	Oratorio Con Drury Lane	*Pot Pourri on 'La ci darem'
10/IV	Phil. Soc.	*Symphony no. 2
13/IV	City Amateur Con.	*Violin Concerto no. 8 Duet for violin and harp
14/IV	Vocal Con.	*Concertante for two violins, op.48
18/IV	Argyll Con.	*Violin Concerto
24/IV	Phil. Soc.	*Duet for violin and harp
27/IV	New Musical Fund Con.	*Violin Concerto Variations on a theme of Mozart
20/V	Charles & William Knyvett's Annual Con.	*Pot Pourri
22/V	Phil. Soc.	*String Quartet
8/VI	Spohr's Benefit Con.	*Symphony no. 2 Duet for violin & harp Irish Melodies op.59 Nonet op.31 Rondo (from Violin Concerto no. 7) Overture Alruna
19/VI	Phil. Soc.	*Symphony no. 1 Nonet op.31
1821		
12/III	Phil. Soc.	Overture in F (MS)
1822		
15/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
1823		
21/IV	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto
19/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Alruna

2/VI	Phil. Soc.	String Quartet (op.43?)

1824

5/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 2
10/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Faust
7/VI	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1 String Quartet

1825

22/VI	Yorkshire Amateur Music Meeting, Leeds	Overture Faust
30/VI	R.A.M. Con.	Concertante op.48

1826

27/II	Phil. Soc	Overture Faust
17/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda String Quartet
15/V	Phil. Soc.	'Si lo sento' F
29/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
26/VII	Yorkshire Amateur Music Meeting, York	Overture Jessonda

1827

19/II	Phil. Soc.	'Si lo sento' F
26/III	R.A.M. Con.	'Si lo sento' F
2/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda

1828

10/III	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Segui o cara' F
14/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
12/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda

26/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Faust
1829		
23/II	Phil. Soc.	Double Quartet op.65
9/III	Phil. Soc.	Scena ed Aria 'Tu m'abbandoni ingrato' op.71
23/III	Phil. Soc.	'Si lo sento'
6/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Pietro von Abano
?	Con. of a Committee of Professors	Overture Pietro von Abano
8/VI	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
15/XII	Benefit Con. at York	'The great scena from Spohr's Faust' (Si lo sento?)
1830		
?/II	Phil. Soc. trial	Symphony no. 3
1/III	Phil. Soc.	'Si lo sento'
?/III	Societa Armonica	Overture op.12
15/III	Phil. Soc.	Overture Pietro von Abano
?/III	City of London Amateur Con.	Overture Pietro von Abano
29/III	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Calma o bella' B
19/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist Duet 'Bella ninfa' J
3/V	Phil. Soc.	Trio 'Sen fugge l'ombra' ZA
17/V	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Entro del tempio' J
27/V	City Amateur Con.	Symphony no. 1
31/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1 'Mi sospinge' ZA
24/IX	Norwich Fest.	The Last Judgement
6/X	Liverpool Fest.	The Last Judgement
1831		
10/II	City Amateur Con.	Symphony no. 3
21/II	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Calma o bella' B 'Mi sospinge' ZA Double Quartet in D min. op.65

28/II	City of London Amateur Con.	'Va sbramando' F
7/III	Phil. Soc.	Overture Faust 'Che sento' F
21/III	Phil. Soc.	The Last Judgement
28/III	City Amateur Con.	Agnus Dei - Dona Nobis Pacem (Mass in C op.54)
?	City of London Amateur Con.	Septet from The Last Judgement
5/IV	Covent Garden	Opera Azor and Zemira
22/IV	Mr. Vaughan's Benefit Con.	The Last Judgement
9/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
23/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 3
30/V	Soc. Armonica	Overture Der Berggeist
6/VI	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Alcymist
20/VI	Mr. Greatorex's Benefit	Duet 'Se gui o cara' F 'Blest are the Departed' LJ
7/VII	Manchester, Hummel's Con.	'Gentle Thoughts'
2/IX	Dublin Musical Fest.	The Last Judgement
27/IX	Derby Fest.	Violin Concerto
30/IX	Derby Fest.	The Last Judgement
29/XII	Manchester, Gentlemen's New Con.	The Last Judgement
?	Oxford, Con. in the Sheldonian	The Last Judgement

1832

12/III	Phil. Soc.	'Ah un ombra di speranza' PA
20/III	Drury Lane Theatre	Opera Der Alchymist (English version selected from various of Spohr's works)
26/III	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 2
30/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
28/V	Phil. Soc.	'Mi sospinge' ZA
2/VII	Societa Armonica	Overture Jessonda Chorus from Faust

12/IX	Gloucester Music Meeting	The Last Judgement (Selection)

1833

21/I	Vocal Soc.	Scena from Faust
25/II	Phil. Soc.	Clarinet Concerto no. 2 in E flat 'Ah che i giorni' A
4/III	Vocal Soc.	'Forsake Me Not' LJ
11/III	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1 Duet 'Bella ninfa' J
15/IV	Phil. Soc.	Trio 'Qual canna al suol' J
29/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 3
17/V	Moris' Con.	'Si lo sento' F
18/VI	Oxford commemoration Con.	Octet op.32 Clarinet concerto
25/IX	Wocester Fest.	The Last Judgement
4/X	Liverpool Fest.	The Last Judgement

1834

13/I	Vocal Soc.	'E mi lasci cosi'
10/II	Vocal Soc.	Duet from Jessonda
3/III	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
17/III	Phil. Soc.	Nonet op.31
24/III	Vocal Soc.	Selection from Azor & Zemira
7/IV	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 8
12/V	Societa Armonica	Duet from Der Berggeist 'Tu m'abbandoni ingrato' op.71
19/V	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Bella ninfa' J Overture Faust
2/VI	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Calma o bella' B Overture Der Berggeist 'Si lo sento'
9/IX	Hereford Fest.	Overture to The Last Judgement
10/IX	Hereford Fest.	The Last Judgement - Evening concert, 2nd half, entirely a selection from Azor & Zemire

11/IX	Hereford Fest.	Overture Jessonda
?	R.A.M. Con.	Symphony no. 2

1835

2/II	Vocal Soc.	Duet from Faust
23/II	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 4 'Ode to Sound' (Die Weihe der Töne)
2/III	Vocal Soc.	Duet from Jessonda
23/III	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda 'Tu m'abbandoni ingrato' op.71
6/IV	Phil. Soc.	'Ah un ombra' PA
20/IV	Societa Armonica	Symphony no. 4
27/IV	Phil. Soc.	'Va sbramando' F
9/V	Blagrove's Con.	Double quartet Overture Jessonda
11/V	Phil. Soc.	'Si lo sento' F
15/V	Mori's Con.	Symphony no. 4 (2 Movements) New Violin Concerto (no. 9 or no. 11)
18/V	Societa Armonica	Symphony no. 1 'Va sbramando' F
25/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1 'Stolto me' F
8/VI	Phil. Soc.	Double Quartet op.87
10/VI	Mori's Morning Con.	Allegro (violin)
?/VI	Societa della concordia	'Rose softly blooming' ZA
6/VII	Cambridge Fest.	The Last Judgement (selection)
8/IX	York Fest.	Aria from Azor & Zemira
10/IX	York Fest.	The Last Judgement
17/IX	Gloucester Fest.	The Last Judgement pt II
18/IX	Gloucester Fest.	Overture Jessonda

1836

3/II	Class. Ch. Con.	'Tu m'abbandonai ingrato' op.71
10/II	Class. Ch. Con.	String Quartet

22/II	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Ah facciamo' J
9/III	Concerts of Class. Instrumental Music	String Quartet in G min.
14/III	Vocal Soc.	The Christian Prayer
21/III	Phil. Soc.	Concertino for violin
21/III	Societa Armonica	Overture Alruna
29/III	Liverpool, 'Oratorios'	Selection from Spohr
11/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 2
14/IV	Quartet Con.	String Quartet
18/IV	Vocal Soc.	Trio 'Night's lingering shades' ZA
18/IV	Societa Armonica	Aria from Jessonda Overture Macbeth
20/IV	Exeter Hall Fest.	Unendlicher Gott
25/IV	Phil. Soc.	'Ah sorrida amico' J Trio 'Qual canna al suol' J
28/IV	Mr Henry Dulcken's Con.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA
1/V	Societa Armonica	'Va sbramando' F
2/V	Mad. Dulcken's Con.	Quintet op.52 (Piano & Wind)
9/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Pietro von Abano 'Ah che luran' PA
16/V	Societa Armonica	'Calma o bella' B
19/V	R.A.M. Con.	The Last Judgement
23/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
7/VI	Sacred Harmonic Soc.	The Last Judgement
20/VI	Mr Blagrove's Con.	Concertino for Violin
1/VII	R.A.M. Con.	Overture Jessonda Violin Concerto no. 11
27/VII	Concert at Mitcham Church	The Last Judgement (selection)
14/IX	Manchester Fest.	The Christian's Prayer
15/IX	Manchester Fest.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA
16/IX	Manchester Fest.	The Last Judgement
21/IX	Norwich Fest.	Overture Jessonda 'Si lo sento' F
23/IX	Norwich Fest.	The Christian's Prayer

29/IX	Worcester Fest.	'Nights lingering shades' ZA
30/IX	Worcester Fest.	The Last Judgement
5/X	Liverpool Fest.	The Christian's Prayer

1837

25/I	Con. of Class, Instrumental Music	String Quartet op.58 no. 1
?/I	The Miss Broadhursts' Con. Bath	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
30/1	Choral Harmonists	The Last Judgement
1/II	Moris Class. Cha. Con.	Nonet op.31
13/II	R.A.M. Con.	Nonet op.31
14/II	Mori's Class. Cha. Con.	Romance from Faust
17/III	Manchester, Concert Hall	Symphony no. 1
17/III	Mori's Class. Ch. Con.	Double Quartet op.65
18/III	Moscheles Soires	Aria from The Crucifixion ('Tears of Sorrow')
?/III	H.J. Gauntlett's Lectures	'Jesus Heavenly Master' The Crucifixion
26/III	Liverpool, Sacred Con.	Overture to The Last Judgement
27/III	Vocal Con.	The Crucifixion
30/III	Quartet Con.	String Quartet op.29 no. 2
3/IV	Phil. Soc.	'Tears of Sorrow' C 'Si lo sento' F
10/IV	Societa Armonica	Symphony no. 4
13/IV	Quartet Con.	'Vorrei che amarmi' F
28/IV	Mori's Class. Ch. Con.	Octet op.32
28/IV	Mr Sale's Benefit	'Va sbramando' F
8/V	Societa Armonica	Symphony no. 1
10/V	Mori's Class. Ch. Con.	String Quartet op. 45 no. 1
29/V	Phil. Soc.	'O qual di pene' J
5/VI	Societa Armonica	Overture Jessonda
12/VI	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
?	Master George Case's Con.	Nonet op.31

?/XII	Edinburgh, Professional Con.	Symphony no. 4
9/XII	R.A.M. Con.	The Last Judgement

1838

18/I	Blagrove's Quartet Con.	String Quartet
31/I	Mori's Class. Ch. Con.	Nonet op.31
1/II	City Quartet Con.	String Quartet op.74 no. 1
22/II	Blagrove's Quartet Con.	Double Quartet op. 87
23/II	Class. Con. by Wind Instruments	Quintet op.52
5/V	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'She blooms a flow'ret' J
?/III	Edinburgh, Professional Con.	Nonet op.31
22/III	Blagrove's Quartet Con.	'Felicity'
26/III	Vocal Society	'Forsake me not' LJ
2/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 3
7/V	Phil. Soc.	String Quartet
18/V	Mrs Anderson's Annual Con.	Overture Jessonda (by her Majesty's band of wind instruments)
25/V	Sterndale Bennett's Con.	Symphony no. 2
4/VI	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 4
26/VI	M. Sedlatzek & Sig. Brizzi's Con.	Vocal Music by Spohr
3/VII	Choral Harmonic Soc.	Selections from Spohr
18/VII	Exeter Hall Soc.	The Last Judgement
?/VII	Mr. Thomas's Con.	String Quartet in E Flat (op.58 no. 1?)

1839

28/I	Mori's Class. Ch. Con.	Nonet op.31 'O lovely maiden' ZA
21/II	Blagrove's Quartet Con.	'The bird and the maiden' (from op.103) 'Tu m'abbandoni ingrato' op.71
25/II	Mori's Class. Ch. Con.	Double Quartet op.87 Duet 'Fairest maiden' J

4/III	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Children pray' CP
18/III	Phil. Soc.	'Si lo sento' F Overture Der Alchymist
23/III	R.A.M. Con.	God thou art great
8/IV	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Ah che il mio cor' A Violin Concerto no. 8
22/IV	Phil. Soc.	Octet op.32
6/V	Phil. Soc.	'Tears of Sorrow' C Symphony no. 1
13/V	Societa Armonica	Overture Faust
27/V	Societa Armonica	Symphony no. 4
17/VI	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 3
15/VII	Mr. Pitman's Organ Recital (Christ's Church, Spitalfields)	Allegro in G, Rondo in G
10/IX	Worcester Fest.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
18-20/IX	Norwich Fest.	*The Crucifixion *Violin Concerto no. 14, Sonst und Jetzt *Concertante for two Violins op.48 *Overture and Air from Faust 'Nights, lingering shades' ZA 'Fairest maiden' J

1840

10/II	Choral Harmonists	The Last Judgement
4/III	City Quartet Con.	Quintet op.53 (Piano & String version of op.52)
9/III	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 5 'Night's lingering shades' ZA
12/III	Blagrove's Quartet Con.	Double Quartet op.65
12/III	Liverpool, Phil. Soc.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
2/IV	Devon & Exeter Quartet Con.	String Quartet
6/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 6 The Historical
20/IV	Blagrove's Quartet Con.	Quintet op.53 Songs with clarinet from op.103
4/V	Societa Armonica	Overture Der Berggeist 'Va sbramando' F
21/V	Prince's Theatre (German Opera)	Opera Faust

25/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
29/V	Norwich, Mr Rohlff's Con.	Violin Concerto no. 8
8/VI	Phil. Soc.	'Der Kriegeslust' J
10/VI	Blagrove's Benefit Con.	Overture Jessonda Duet Concertante for 2 violins
15/VI	Societa Armonica	unidentified Spohr
18/VI	Prince's Theatre (German Opera)	Opera Jessonda
19/VI	Royal Society of Female Musicians	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
22/VI	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
?/IX	Hereford Fest.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
?/X	Hull Fest.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
10/XII	Devon & Exeter Quartet Soc.	'Forsake me not' LJ

1841

19/II	Devon & Exeter Quartet Soc.	String Quartet
22/III	Societa Armonica	Symphony no. 4
29/III	Phil. Soc.	Quintet 'Zemira children' ZA
1/IV	Quartet Con.	Double Quartet op.77
7/IV	Mr. T.J. Adams' & Mr. Collyer's Con.	Quintet op.52
8/IV	Eastern Institution	'Forsake me not' LJ
8/IV	Norwich Choral Society	The Last Judgement (selections)
15/IV	Quartet Con.	Terzetto 'Jesus heavenly master' C
17/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
7/VI	Mr Cipriani Potter's Con.	Duet from Der Berggeist Soprano scena from Azor & Zemira
25/VIII	Manchester, Gentlemen's Con.	Overture Pietro von Abano
8/IX	Gloucester Fest.	The Last Judgement 'Dare I believe'
?/IX	Manchester, Undress Con.	Overture Pietro von Abano
30/IX	Church Stretton, The Misses William's Con.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA

20/X	Sacred Harmonic	The Last Judgement
5/XI	Sacred Harmonic	The Last Judgement
10/XI	Shrewsbury Fest.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
15/XI	R.A.M. Con.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
18/XI	Devon & Exeter Quartet Con.	'Fairest maiden' J
?/XII	Manchester, Quartet Con.	Romance from Azor & Zemira

1842

5/I	Devon & Exeter Quartet Con.	String Quartet in A min.
19/I	Manchester, Gentlemen's Con.	Overture Pietro von Abano
16/II	Manchester, Gentlemen's Undress Con.	Overture Jessonda
3/III	Devon & Exeter Quartet Con.	Sonata Concertante op.113
4/III	Quartet Con.	String Quartet op.82 no. 2
7/III	Manchester, Quartet Con.	'Rippling waters'
19/III	R.A.M. Con.	The Last Judgement
28/III	Societa Armonica	Overture Der Berggeist
4/IV	Manchester, Quartet Con.	Quartet op. 82 no. 2
18/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 2
16/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
30/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 7 Irdisches und Göttlisches im Menschenleben
4/VI	Mr Kiallmark's Con.	Solo Quartet Duet from Faust
6/VI	Societa Armonica	Symphony no. 4 'Va sbramando' F
13/VI	Phil. Soc.	'Gentle thoughts' ZA
13/IX	Norwich Fest.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA
14/IX	Norwich Fest.	Overture Jessonda
15/IX	Norwich Fest.	The Fall of Babylon
7/XI	Subscription Con. City of London Tavern	'Night's lingering Shades ZA
27/XII	Manchester	The Fall of Babylon
?/XI	Subscription Con. Hanover Sq.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA

2/XII	London Mechanics' Institute	'Night's lingering shades' ZA

1843

20/I	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'With grief oppressed' (from op.103)
23/I	Sterndale Bennett's Ch. Con.	Piano Trio op.119.
20/III	Phil. Soc.	'O what is man' FB
22/III	G.A. Macfarren & J.W. Davison's Con.	'By the silver beams of luna'
3/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist 'Love how mighty' F
1/V	Dando's Quartet Con.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA
4/V	Belfast, Choral Soc.	'Forsake me not' LJ
8/V	Phil. Soc.	'Der Kriegeslust' J Violin Concerto no. 8
12/V	Dando's Quartet Con.	Unspecified song
19/V	Mr. T.M. Mudie's Con.	'Segui o cara' F 'Night's lingering shades' ZA
20/V	Messrs Hermans' Class. Ch. Con., Liverpool	String Quartet
25/V	Blagrove's Soirées	'Folg' dem freunde' F
5/VI	Phil. Soc.	'Stille noch' F
12/VI	Mr. C. Potter's Con.	'Der Kriegeslust' J 'Stille noch' F
12/VI	Norwich Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
14/VI	Her Majesty's Con. Buckingham Palace	'Si lo sento' F
19/VI	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
21/VI	Blagrove's Séance Musicale	Adagio
2/VII	Queen Square Select Soc.	Double Quartet op. 65 Quintet op.52 Double Quartet op. 77 Nonet op.31 String Quintet Octet op.32 Double Quartet op.87
3/VII	Phil. Soc.	*Violin Concerto *Overture Der Alchymist *Symphony no. 4 *'Now for him I loved' J

7/VII	Concert for Dr. Spohr (Hanover Sq.)	*The Fall of Babylon
10/VII	Phil. Soc. (By Command)	*Violin Concerto *'Der Kriegeslust' J *Overture Macbeth
11/VII	Filtsch's Matinée	'In the silver beams of luna', 'Rippling waters'
21/VII	Dr. Spohr's Con. (Exeter Hall)	*The Fall of Babylon
18/VII	Concert in aid of the German Hospital	Violin Concerto no. 8
20/X	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Quintet op.52
14/XI	Lit. and Sci. Inst. Con.	'Fairest maiden' J
17/XI	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'Amid the battle's raging' J
20/XI	Southwark Subscription Con.	'Dearest let thy footsteps' F 'Foe of sadness'
24/XI	Bury St. Edmunds, Ch. Con.	'Oh say fond shepherds'
24/XI	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'Amid the battle's raging' J
1/XII	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Piano Sonata op.125
15/XII	Norwich Phil. Soc.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
20/XII	Lit. & Sci. Inst. Con.	'Dearest let thy footsteps' F
24/XII	Liverpool Phil. Soc.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA

1844

8/I	Concert in aid of Surrey Dispensary	'Amid the battle's raging' J 'Night's lingering shades' ZA
10/I	Lit. & Sci. Inst. Con.	'Amid the battle's raging' J 'When silent grief oppresses'
11-12/I	Exeter	Unspecified Spohr
15/I	Choral Harmonists	The Last Judgement (selections) Jessonda (selection)
17/I	Sacred Con.	'Children pray' CP 'Praise his awful name' LJ 'Jesus heavenly master' C
25/I	H.J. Banister's Benefit Con.	Quartet Brillant op.43
28/I	Mr Holmes's Con.	Piano Sonata op.25
31/I	Mad. Dulcken's Soirées	Quintet op.52

5/II	Sterndale Bennett's ch. Con.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA 'Fairest maiden' J
10/II	H.J. Banister's 1st Quartet Party	Piano Sonata op.125
12/II	Mr Holmes's Soirées	'Fairest maiden' J 'Rose softly blooming' ZA
13/II	Dando's Quartet Con.	'Amid the battles raging' J
19/II	Bristol and Clifton Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
26/II	Sterndale Bennett's Ch. Con.	'Ah che giorni' A 'Dearest let thy footsteps' F
28/II	Sacred Con.	Movement from Mass (op.54)
8/III	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'Fairest maiden' J
11/III	Dando's Quartet Con.	Double Quartet op. 87
13/III	Lit. & Sci. Inst.	'Send around the ruby treasure' F
25/III	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
4/IV	Mr F. Chatterton's Soirées	'Forsake me not' LF
6/IV	Mr. Banister's Quartet Parties	Quartet in G major
10/IV	Lit. & Sci. Inst. Con.	'Dare I believe'
15/IV	Phil. Soc.	Quintet 'Zemira children' ZA Violin Concerto no. 8
20/IV	R.A.M. Con.	'Si lo sento' F
?/IV	Manchester Fest.	Violin Concerto No. 8
22/IV	Societa Armonica	unspecified vocal music
?/IV	Manchester, Chetham's Glee Club	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
29/IV	Phil. Soc.	Quintet op.52
13/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
27/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture, Duet, Quintet & Chorus F
29/V	Dublin Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
3/VI	Dando's Quartet Con.	String Quartet in C
4/VI	Blagrove's con.	'Rose sofgly blooming' ZA
11/VI	Miss Burfield's Con.	'Der Kriegeslust' J
17/VI	Norwich Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda 'The Huntsman'

25/VI	Sterndale Bennett's Con.	'Stille noch dies Wuthverlangen' F
26/VI	M. Szepanoski's Con.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA
7/VIII	Blagrove's Con.	Symphony no. 1
1/XI	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Nonet op.31
15/XI	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'Dearest let thy footsteps F
?/XI	Lit. & Sci. Inst.	H.J. Lincoln's Illustrated Lecture on Spohr
4/XII	Mad. Dulken's Con.	'Si lo sento' F
13/XII	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'Forsake me not' LJ Piano Trio op.123

1845

8/I	Miss Mounsey's Con. of Sacred Music	Trio 'Loud proclaim' FB
15/III	R.A.M. Con.	The Christian's Prayer
17/III	Liverpool Phil. Soc.	Selection from The Last Judgement
31/III	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 9
15/IV	Musical Union	Double Quartet op.87
28/IV	Phil. Soc.	'Si lo sento' F 'Blöder Thor' F
12/V	Phil. Soc.	'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe' F
15/V	Liverpool Phil. Soc.	Scena from Faust
26/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Faust 'In sinnelust' F
1/VI	Matinée Musicale at Mr. J.W, Davison's	Duet in E min. op.13 (Violin & Viola)
13/VI	Dublin Phil. Soc.	'Der Kriegeslust' J
21/VI?	Matinée Musicale at Mr. J.W. Davison's	Duet in E min. Violin & viola
23/VI	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 5 in C min.
5/VII	Phil. Soc.	'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe' Concertante for 2 Violins op.88
8/VII	John Ella's Matinée Musicale	Double Quartet op.87
17/VI?	Sterndale Bennett's Con.	'Dearest let thy footsteps' F

27/VIII	Worcester Fest.	Last Judgement
8/IX	Norwich Fest.	Calvary
11/IX	Shrewsbury Choral Soc.	unspecified Overture
6/XI	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Nonet in F (announced but omitted, owing to the non-arrival of one of the parts)
5/XII	Jullien's Con. Covent Garden	'By Tales of war' J Symphony no. 4 (1st movement)
8/XII	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Quartet op.43
22/XII	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Nonet op.31
22/XII	Soc.of Brit. Mus.9	Piano Quintet op.130

1846

?/I	Manchester, Hargreaves Choral Soc.	The Fall of Babylon
2/II	Dando's Q. Con.	Double Quartet op.65
?/II	Mr. Lucas Musical Evenings (2nd)	Quintet (Op.130?)
16/III	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 11
18/III	Mr. Muhlenfeldt's Soirées	'Amid the battle's raging' J
21/III	R.A.M. Con.	'Great and wonderful' LJ
25/III	Mr. & Mrs. Wessel's Soirée	Piano Trio op.124
30/III	Phil. Soc.	'Bella ninfa' J
20/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 2
5/V	Musical Union	Nonet op.31
13/V	Dublin Phil. Soc.	'Now for him I loved' J Concertante for Quartet & orchestra 'Blöder Thor' F
8/VI	Cipriani Potter's Con.	'Si lo sento' F
9/VI	Manchester, Concert Hall.	'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe' Overture Jessonda
23/VI	Ella's Matinée	Adagio & Allegro, 4tet, op.61
28-29/VI	Phil. Soc.	God thou art great
26/VIII	Birmingham Fest.	Overture Faust 'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe' 'Si lo sento' F

10/IX	Hereford Fest.	The Fall of Babylon Overture The Last Judgement
?/IX	Manchester	The Fall of Babylon
28/IX	Bristol, Choral Harmonists	The Fall of Babylon
4/XI	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'Children pray' CP
4/XI	Exeter Hall Sacred Harmonic	The Last Judgement
?/XII	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Piano Trio op. 123
?/XII	Grenwich & Blackheath Amateur Mus. Soc.	Overture op.15
22/XII	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Piano Quintet op.130
30/XII	Manchester, Concert Hall	The Last Judgement

1847

5/I	Soc. Brit. Mus.	'In the silver beams of luna'
27/I	Mad. Dulcken's Soirées	'Si lo sento' F
10/II	Dando's Quartet Con.	String Quartet op.4 no. 2
12/II	Mad. Dulcken's Soirées	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
5/III	Amateur Musical Soc.	Symphony no. 1
20/III	Class. Instrumental Con.	Duet for violin & viola op.13
23/III	Musical Union	Double Quartet op.87
?/III	R.A.M. Con.	Violin Concerto no. 8
29/III	Phil. Soc.	Overture to The Last Judgement
12/IV	Phil. Soc.	Concertante for 2 violins op.48
1/V	R.A.M. Con.	'Pray leave us' J
4/V	Musical Union	Andantino & Rondo from Concertante op.88
?/V	Manchester, Gentlemen's Glee Club	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
?/V	Mr. Muhlenfeldt's Con.	Rondo from Jessonda
24/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 4
8/VI	Seguin's Con.	Song From Faust
12/VI	R.A.M. Con.	Duet 'Do not shun me' J
22/VI	Musical Union	Andante & Finale from Double 4tet op.87

?/VI	Mr. Wylde's Con.	Scena from Faust
6/VII	Musical Union	*Quintet op.53
9/VII	Sacred Harmonic Soc.	The Fall of Babylon
16/VII	Sterndale Bennett's Con.	Overture Jessonda 'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe' F
16/VII	Sacred Harmonic Soc.	The Fall of Babylon
?/VII	Musical World Annual Con.	Quartet in B min. 'Rippling waters'
23/VII	Sacred Harmonic Soc.	The 84th Psalm. The Last Judgement
?/VII	Beethoven Quartet Soc. (Meeting in Honour of Spohr)	Quartet op.4 no. 2 Duet op.39 no. 2 *Double Quartet op.87
?/IX	Gloucester Fest.	Selection from the sacred works of Spohr.
	Liverpool Phil. Soc.	Vocal Selection
15/XI	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'Dearest let thy footsteps' F Quintet in D

1848

10/I	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
31/I	Bristol, Conservatoire de Musique	Violin Concerto no. 13
25/II	Amateur Musical Soc.	Symphony no. 1
2/III	Mr. Lidsay Sloper's Soirées	Piano Trio op.133
6/III	Sacred Con.	'Cradle song'
?/III	Sterndale Bennett's Con.	'The bird & the maiden' (from op.103)
13/III	Phil. Soc.	'Gentle thoughts'
3/IV	Mr Chipps' Organ Recital	'Two of Spohr's Overtures'
7/IV	Choral Harmonists	Selection from Jessonda
10/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
24/IV	Dando's Ch. Con.	Duet 'Janseits'
1/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 8
29/V	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 12

28/VI	Blagrove's Quartet Con.	Duet for 2 violins Double Quartet op.87
8/VII	R.A.M. Con.	Violin Concerto in G (1st movt)
11/VIII	Messrs Cooper and Hancock's Con.	Quartet Billante op.43
	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	'Dearest let thy footsteps' F
13/IX	Norwich Fest.9	The Christian's Prayer
?/XI	Jullien's Con., Drury Lane	Symphony no. 4

1849

20/II	Charles Hallé's Ch. Con.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA
5/III	Choral Harmonists	Air & Chorus 'Thou lingering orb' F
10/III	R.A.M. Con.	Quintet op.52 (2 movts)
?/III	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 9
12/IV	Manchester, Concert Hall	'Der Waidmann'
16/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
7/V	Royal Soc. of Female Musicians	'Rose softly blooming' ZA 'Emma'
8/V	Miss Dolby & Mr Lindsay Sloper's Con.	Violin Concerto no. 8 (played, Joachim)
9/V	R.A.M. Con.	Finale to Act III of Jessonda 'The bird and the maiden' (op.103)
14/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 6 The Historical
21/V	Sterndale Bennett's Con.	Aria from Faust
23/V	Ernst & Halle's Con. Manchester	Violin Concerto no. 8
28/VI & 16/VII	Private Amateur Music (Social Union of titled amateurs)	Overture & selection from Jessonda

1850

26/I	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Nonet in F
23/II	Soc. of Brit. Mus.	Double Quartet op.87
25/II	Willy's Con.	Violin Concerto no. 8
4/III	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Dearest let thy footsteps' F

6/III	Molique's Chamber Con.	Quartet Brillant op.68
11/III	Dando's Quartet Con.	Nonet in F
18/III	Phil. Soc.	'Stille noch dies Wuthverlangen F
20/III	Molique's Ch. Con.	Quartet Brillant op.61
23/III	Sacred Harmonic	The Last Judgement
3/IV	Sacred Harmonic	Duo for 2 violins op.67 no. 3
8/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 3
23/IV	Musical Union	Double Quartet op.87
26/IV	Mr Alexander Billet's Con.	Piano Sonata op.125
27/IV	R.A.M. Con.	Violin Concerto no. 8
6/V	Phil. Soc.	Air & Chorus 'Yes lovely Kunegunda' F
13/V	Grand Morning Con. at Her Majesties Theatre	Sextet & Chorus from Faust
14/V	Miss Dolby & Mr. Lindsay Sloper's Concert	Overture Faust
24/V	Royal Italian Opera, Grand Con.	Mefistopheles' Aria Faust
25/V	R.A.M. Con.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA Finale to the last act of Zemire und Azor
27/V	Grand Entertainment at Her Majesties Theatre	Overture Faust
10/VI	Royal Italian Opera, Grand Morning Con.	Tarantella (violin & piano)
17/VI	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
18/VI	Musical Union	Duet 'Now for him' J Double Quartet op.87 'Der Kriegeslust' J
16/VIII	Liverpool Con.	Overture Jessonda
13/XI	Grand National Con.	Concert Overture op.126
25/XI	Grand National Con.	Symphony no. 9 The Seasons
10/IX	Gloucester Fest.	Overture Jessonda

1851

28/I	Clifton, Mr. Cooper's Con.	Duet Concertante

20/III	Private Amateur Union	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
24/III	Phil Soc.	Quintet 'Tell me good Ali' ZA 'Night's lingering shades' ZA
7/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda Intro. Quartet & Chorus, Jessonda
28/IV	Musical Union	Double Quartet op.65
7/V	Molique's Ch. Con.	String Quartet op.74 no. 1
12/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
26/V	Phil. Soc.	'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe' F Overture Pietro von Abano
9/VI	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 2
23/VI	Phil. Soc.	'Si lo sento' F Duet 'In Sinnenlust' F
12/VII	Organ Performance at the Great Exhibition	1st Movt. of Quartet in G min.
26/VIII	Worcester Fest.	Last Judgement 2nd part
27/VIII	Worcester Fest.	Selection from Jessonda
	Blagrove's Quartet Con.	Double Quartet op.77 'Rose softly blooming' ZA
10/IX	Manchester, Grand Dress Con.	Violin Concerto no. 9
17/IX	Jullien's Concert	Symphony no. 4
1852		
?/I	Manchester, Halle's Ch. Con.	'Rose, in the charms' ZA
12/I	Liverpool, Mr. E.W. Thomas's Class. Ch. Con. 4	Duo op.39 no. 2
29/I	Winter Mus. Evening.	Quartet in E
29/I	Manchester, Mr. C.A, Seymour's Quartet Con.	Duo op.39 no. 2
19/II	Winter Musical Evenings	Nonet in F op.31
16/III	Dando's Quartet Con.	Double Quartet in E min.
20/III	R.A.M. Con.	Violin Concerto no. 8
24/IV	R.A.M. Con.	Duet for two violins
26/IV	Herr Jansa's Soirées Musicales	String Quartet op.74 no. 3

3/V	Phil. Soc.	Double Quartet op.77
13/V	Concert at Buckingham Palace	'In sinnenlust' F
17/V	Phil. Soc.	'Der Kriegeslust' J
18/V	Musical Union	Quintet in E op.33
31/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 2
16/VI	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto in G
18/VI	Molique's Soirées	Duo for two violins op.67
23/VI	Quartet Association	Duo op.39 no. 1
25/VI	Molique's Con.	Quartet op.58 no. 1 Duo op.67 no. 3
26/VI	London S.S. Wesley Organ Recital St. Georges in the East	Instrumental Piece
28/VI	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda Duet 'Bella ninfa' J
5/VII	Sacred Harmonic	Calvary
15/VII	Royal Italian Opera	Faust
4/VIII	Music at Osborne House	'Aus dieses Tempels' J 'Romanze' F
28/VIII	Music at Osborne House	'Folg' dem Freunde' F
2/IX	Manchester, Con.	'Si lo sento' F
7/IX	Birmingham Fest.	Overture Jessonda
9/IX	Birmingham Fest.	'Ah un amore' F 'Bella ninfa' J
15/IX	Hereford Fest.	God thou art great
15/IX	Hereford Fest.	The Last Judgement
18/IX	Norwich Fest.	Chorus, March & Dance, Jessonda
19/IX	Norwich Fest.	Duet from Faust
21/IX	Norwich Fest.	Duet from Jessonda
5/XI	Sacred Harmonic	The Last Judgement
22/XI	Manchester, Mr. J.T, Harris's Class. Ch. Con.	Piano Trio op.119
25/XI	Sacred Harmonic	The Last Judgement
2/XII	Liverpool, Mr. E. Thomas's Class. Ch. Con.	Double Quartet op.65

8/XII	Amateur Choral Society	Jessonda (Opera)
9/XII	Manchester, Hallé's Con.	'Rose softly blooming' ZA

1853

27/I	Manchester, Class. Mus. Society	Quintet op.53
3/II	Manchester, J. Thorne Harris's Con.	Piano Trio op.133
17/II	Winter Musical Evenings	Quintet op.53
21/II	Dando's Con.	Piano Quintet in D min. op.130
28/II	Dando's Con.	String Quartet op.58 no.1
3/III	Winter Musical Evenings	String Quintet op.33 no. 2
14/III	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
16/III	New Phil. Soc.	'Fairest maiden' J
17/III	Winter Musical Evenings	String Quintet op.33 no. 2
21/III	Dando's Con.	Double Quartet op.65
31/III	Manchester, Mr. Seymour's Quartet Con.	Quintet op.53
4/IV	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 7
2/V	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Calma o bella' B
16/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
24/V	Concert at Osborne House	'Bella ninfa' J
30/V	Phil. Soc.	'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe' F Nonet op.31
27/VI	Mr. Glover's Benefit Con.	'Liebe ist die zarte Blüthe' F 'O bone pastor' 'Fairest maiden' J
27/VI	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 6 Duet 'Ah, facciamo' J
29/VI	New Phil. Soc.	Concert Overture op.126 Overture Jessonda Aria from Jessonda
?/VI	Quartet Association	Nonet op.31
4/VII	Sterndale Bennett's Con.	'Dearest let thy footsteps' F 'All is quiet' 'A bird sat on an Alder bough' (op.103)

8/VII	New Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 7 Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra Overture Der Berggeist
12/VII	Musical Union	*String Sextet op.140
25/VII	Mr. French Flowers' Exhibition of Vocalisation	'O'er moor & mountain'(Male voices)
1/VIII	Manchester, Gentlemen's Con.	Duet from Jessonda
6/VIII	Royal Italian Opera	Jessonda
23/VIII	Glasgow, Organ Recital	Overture Jessonda
20/IX	Leeds Musical Union	Overture Jessonda
?/IX	Colchester, Con.	'Gia spanta il ciel l'aurore'
22/XII	Manchester, Class. Ch. Con.	Piano Trio op.119

1854

30/I	Dando's Quartet Con.	String Quartet op.45 no. 2
2/II	Manchester Class. Ch. Mus. Society	Piano Quintet op.130
14/II	Mr. Lindsay Sloper's Soirées	Duo Concertante for Violin & Piano, in G min. op.95
17/II	Wednesday Evening Con.	Overture Jessonda
23/II	Winter Musical Evenings	String Quartet op.45 no. 2
6/III	Phil. Soc.	'Di militari honori' J
?/III	Winter Musical Evenings	Quartet op.58 no. 1
20/III	Phil. Soc.	Concertante op.88
28/III	Mr. C. Salaman's Soirées	Quintet op.53
3/IV	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 4
8/IV	Orchestral Union	Symphony no. 2
4/V	Quartet Association	Piano Trio in E min. op.119
8/V	Phil. Soc.	'Bella ninfa' J
22/V	Phil. Soc.	Duet 'Forsake me not' LJ Overture Der Alchymist
5/VI	Mr, G.A. Osborne's Morning Con.	Piano Trio op.119
6/VI	Musical Union	String Quintet op.33 no. 2

7/VI	New Phil. Soc.	Recit. & Aria from Faust
12/VI	R.A.M. Con.	'Night's lingering shades' ZA
13/VI	Musical Union	Piano Trio op. 119
15/VI	Quartet Association	Piano Quintet op.130
19/VI	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
29/VI	Quartet Assocaiton.	String Quartet op.45 no. 2
13/VII	Quartet Association	Double Quartet op.87
12/IX	Norwich Fest.	Soprano Air from The Crucifixion
13/IX	Norwich Fest.	selections from Der Alchymist & Jessonda
5/IX & 6/IX	Worcester Fest.	Duo for 2 violins 'Night's lingering shades' ZA
14/IX	Worcester Fest.	The Last Judgement
21/IX	Manchester, Herr F. Unger's Con.	Piano Trio op.119
30/XI	Manchester, Class. Ch. Mus. Soc.	Piano Trio op.119
30/XII	Manchester, Providence Chapel, S.S. Wesley's Organ Recital	Two arrangements from Spohr

1855

11/I	Manchester, Class. Ch. Mus. Soc.	Piano Trio op.133
27/I	Mr. E.W. Thomas's Shilling Con.	Duet for 2 violins
27/II	R.A.M. Con.	The Last Judgement
12/III	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 8 'Dramatic'
15/III	Winter Musical Evenings	String Quartet op.58 no. 2
16/IV	Phil. Soc.	'Va sbramando' F 'Ja ich fuhl es' F
30/IV	Phil. Soc.	Nonet op.31
15/V	Musical Union	Piano Trio op.119
23/V	New Phil. Soc.	Air from Jessonda
28/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
29/V	Musical Union	Double Quartet op.87

11/VI	Phil. Soc.	'Di militari onori' J
19/VI	Musical Union	Scherzo, Trio & Finale from Piano Trio in E min. op.119
22/VI	Reunion Des Arts	Adagio in E flat (2 violins) (from op.39)
22/VI	Sig. Regondi's Con.	Scena Dramatica Conc. no. 8 played on
26/VI	Musical Union	Quartet in E flat op.58 no. 1
22/VIII	Hereford Mus. Fest.	Overture to The Last Judgement
23/VIII	Hereford Mus. Fest.	The Christian's Prayer
3/XII	Amateur Musical Soc.	'Ratlose Liebe' (part song)
13/XII	Manchester, Unger's Class. Con.	Sonata Concertante op.115

1856

3/I	Manchester, Class. Con.	Violin Due op.67 no. 3
17/I	Manchester, Class. Con.	Piano Trio op.123
17/II	Jenny Lind's Con.	Overture Jessonda
23/II	Chrystal Palace Con.	'A bird sat on an Alder bough' (op.103
13/III	Herr Ignaze Tedesco's Con.	Quintet op.52
2/IV	New Phil. Soc.	Recit. & Aria (Faust)
15/IV	Musical Union	Nonet op.31
23/IV	Manchester, Con. Hall	Air Jessonda
23/IV	New Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 7 Air with Chorus, Jessonda
28/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda Duet, 'Folg' Dem Freunde'
1/V	Manchester, St. Peter's Church	'When this scene of trouble closes' C
5/V	Amateur Mus. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
12/V	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 8
26/V	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 2
30/V	Chrystal Palace Con.	Overture Jessonda 'Va sbramando' F

2/VI	Mr. & Mrs. A. Gilbert & Miss Cole's Con.	'Rose wer bist du' ZA
2/VI	Molique's Con.	Quintet op.33 no. 2
11/VI	Jenny Lind's Con.	'Di militari onori' J
30/VI	Jenny Lind's Con.	Violin Concerto no. 8
2/VII	H.C. Cooper's Con.	Duo op.13
2/VII	Music at Buckingham Palace	Duet 'Pazzerello, oh qual ardir' F
11/VIII	London Sacred Harmonic	The Last Judgement
15/VIII	Mr. Smart's Organ Recital	Overture Jessonda
10/IX	Gloucester Fest.	Concertante op. 88
11/IX	Gloucester Fest.	'Forsake me not' LJ
20/XII	Crystal Palace Con.	Overture Jessonda

1857

14/II	Crystal Palace Saturday Con.	Adagio & Rondo from 1st Clar. Con.
23/II	Amateur Musical Soc.	selection from Jessonda
3/III	Musical Union	Quartet Brillante op.43
17/III	Musical Union	String Sextet op.140
20/IV	Phil. Soc.	'Di militari onori! J
21/IV	Musical Union	Double Quartet op.65
18/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Berggeist
19/V	Musical Union	Piano Trio op. 123
26/VI	Crystal Palace Con.	Overture Jessonda
29/VI	Phil. Soc.	Symphony no. 1
21/XI	Crystal Palace Con	Movements from The Power of Sound (Symphony no. 4)
27/XI	Sacred Harmonic Soc.	The Last Judgement
	Torquay, Con.	'The bird & the maiden' (op.103)
	Norwich Fest.	Symphony no. 9 The Seasons

1858

2/II	Hullah's Orchestral Con.	Finale from Azor & Zemira

16/II	Hullah's Orchestral Con.	'Stille noch dies Wuthverlagen' F
20/II	Crystal Palace Con.	Overture Jessonda
23/II	Musical Union	String Quintet op.33 no. 2
3/IV	Musical Union	Violin Concerto no. 8
26/IV	Phil. Soc.	Overture Der Alchymist
23/III	Musical Union	Duo op.13
10/V	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto (unspecified)
24/V	Phil. Soc.	Overture Jessonda
26/V	Molique's Con.	Violin Concerto no. 7
7/VI	Phil. Soc.	'When this scene of trouble closes' C
9/VI	Pauer's Soirees Musicales	Barcarolle & Scherzo (from op.135)
14/VI	New Phi. Soc.	Duet 'Schones Madchen' J
15/VI	Musical Union	Double Quartet op. 87
21/VI	Phil. Soc.	Violin Concerto no. 8
24/VIII	Hereford Fest.	The Last Judgement
2/IX	Birmingham Fest.	Overture Der Alchymist
9/IX	Leeds Festival	Overture Jessonda
10/IX	Leeds Festival	'O quanta vaga' ZA
13/XI	Crystal Palace Con.	Overture Jessonda
17/XII	Nottingham Sub. Con.	String Quartet op.45 no. 2
11/V	Musical Union	Quartet Brillante op.43

Appendix C

English Publications of Spohr reviewed in Periodicals 1825 - 1833

Prior to 1825 there seem to have been one or two arrangements for chamber ensemble of orchestral works by Spohr, these are discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 31) They were not, apparently, reviewed. Between 1825 and 1833 a very considerable number of extracts and arrangements from Spohr's works, particularly the operas Faust, Zemire und Azor and Jessonda appeared in English editions. The following list has been compiled from reviews and announcements found in contemporary periodicals. The titles are given as in the periodicals and may well differ from the information on the title pages in some cases; the majority of these publications are untraceable in library holdings. Despite the bibliographical unreliability of this list it seems worth including for ease of reference to reviews and as a guide to dating any of these editions which may come to light. From the mid 1830's English editions of Spohr became so numerous that their inclusion here would have demanded far more space than is available.

In each entry the source is indicated by the journal's abbreviation (as given in the bibliography, below p. 379ff) volume number and page number, and where a publication was reviewed the reference is followed by the letter 'r'.

1825

'Brilliant overture to the Opera of Jessonda composed and arranged for the pianoforte by Louis Spohr'.
Ewer & Johanning H,iii,191r

'The admired Airs in Spohr's celebrated Opera Faust'. Arranged for piano by J.H. Griesbach.
Cocks & Co. H,iii,209; RA,vii,55r

'Select airs from Spohr's Jessonda, Book I'. Arr. for piano duet.
Boosey & Co. QMM,vii,549;RA,vii,54r

'Amusements de l'opera'. Book 7, from Jessonda.
Boosey & Co. QMM,vii,407; RA, vi,116r

'The favourite Airs in Spohr's celebrated Opera Jessonda'. Arr. for piano by J.H. Griesbach.
Cocks & Co. H,iii,209;RA,vii,55r

'Pot Pourri of Favourite Airs from Louis Spohr's Opera Jessonda'. Arr. for piano.
Ewer & Co. H,iii,139r

1826

'Overture to Faust arranged for pianoforte by Spohr, with a Flute accompaniment (ad lib.) by C. Dumon'.
Wessel & Stoddart. QMM,viii,520

'Airs from Spohr's Faust arranged for Flute, by Raphael Dressler'.
Cocks & Co. QMM,viii,386

'Select Airs from Spohr's Faust, arranged for the Pianoforte, with an accompaniment for the Flute ad lib. by J.F. Burrows'.
Paine & Hopkins. H,iv,36r IBook I); H,iv,76r (Books 2 & 3)

'Ewer and Johanning's Collection of favourite and Modern Marches, etc., for the Pianoforte Nos 5-9'. Including the Polonaise from Faust.
Ewer & Johanning. H,iv,36

'Overture to Faustus, by Spohr, arranged as a duet by J.F, Burrows'.
Goulding & D'Almaine. H,iv,167r; RA,vii,353r

'Two Airs from Spohr's Faust, arranged for the Harp and Pianoforte', by N. C. Bochsa.
Cocks & Co. H,iv,245; RA,viii,182r

1827

'Select Airs from Spohr's Opera of Faust...Book I'. Arr.for piano duet by Vincent Novello.
Novello. H,v,230r

1828

'Sei Studi per il violino, Spohr'.
Wessel & Stoddart H,vi,18r

'Select Airs from Spohr's Opera of Faust'. Arr. for piano duet by Vincent Novello; Books 2,3, & 4.
Novello H,vi,85r

'Select Airs from the opera of Jessonda arranged by Vincent Novello'. Piano duet, book 1.
Novello. H,vi,161r

'A Collection of Movements selected from the Sacred Vocal works of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Hummel, Cherubini, Romberg, Spohr... arranged as voluntaries by W.H. Callcott'. Organ.
J.P, Callcott. H,vi,253

1829

'A Selection of Sacred melodies from the works of the most celebrated composers viz Beethoven, Cramer, Haydn, Mozart, Rossini, Spohr etc.
Cramer, Addison & Beale. H,vii,59

'La Gaité, 7th set of Quadrilles, selected from the works of Spohr, by L. Zerbini'. From Jessonda.
Wessel & Stoddart. H,vii,112r

1830

'Three themes from the operas of Hummel and Spohr'. Arr. for two flutes and piano, containing an aria and chorus from Faust.
Cocks & Co. H,viii,300

1831

The Last Judgement /Vocal score/
J.A. Novello H,ix,142ffr

'La Gaité, 13th set of Quadrilles from Spohr's Zemira and Azor'. Arr. L. Zerbini.
Wessel & Stoddart H,ix,145

'Select Airs from Spohr's Azor and Zemira'. Arr. for piano duet by J.F. Burrows, book 1.
Goulding & D'Almaine H,ix,170

'Select airs from Zemira and Azor'. Arr. for piano, with flute, violin and 'cello by Vincent Novello.
Novello. A,vi,765r

'Mélange from Spohr's Azor and Zemira'. Arr. for piano by Samuel Godbe.
Keith, Prowse & Co. H,ix,196

'A Selection of Airs etc. in Spohr's opera Azor & Zemira'. Arr. for piano by J.C. Nightingale, books 1 & 2.
Luff. H,ix,220r

1832

'La Gaité, 18th set of Quadrilles, selected from Spohr's Alchymist by L. Zerbini'.
Wessel & Co. H,x,82r

'Overture to The Alchymist'. Arr. for piano by L. Zerbini.
Wessel & Co. H,x,108r

1833

'Overture to Spohr's Grand Romantic Opera Jessonda'. Arr. for piano duet by L. Zerbini.
Wessel & Co. H,xi,33

'Recit. and Air, "Ah! che i giorni," from Spohr's Opera Der Alchymist'. /Translated by Edward Taylor./
Cramer & Co. H,xi,197

REFERENCES

References

In these references newspapers and periodicals will be identified by the abbreviations given in the bibliography. All books which have been cited are listed in the bibliography with full title, place and date of publication. These will be identified here by the surname of the author and a short title, or, where the title is given in the text, op. cit.

One other abbreviation used is LSA for Louis Spohr's Autobiography.

Chapter 1

1. Smart Papers iii,23 /In the British Library, dept. of manuscripts/.
2. Gál, The Musician's World, p.23
3. see LSA, i,109
4. Speyer, Wilhelm Speyer der Liedercomponist, p.114
5. ibid., p.115
6. ibid., p.116
7. LSA, ii,66
8. Speyer, op.cit., pp.47-57
9. MW, xxxvi(1860),249ff
10. LSA, ii,77
11. Jacobs, 'Spohr and the baton', Music and Letters,xxxi(1950),307ff
12. Speyer, op.cit., p.50
13. see Whistling & Hofmeister, Handbuch der musikalischen Litteratur, Dritter Nachtrag (1820), p.2
14. see MW,xii(1839),366
15. LSA, ii,84
16. Carse, op.cit., p.319
17. Jacobs, op. cit.
18. H,xi(1833),96
19. LSA,ii,82
20. Schletterer, op. cit., p.x
21. MW,xxxvi(1860),250
22. LSA,ii,81-82
23. MW,xxxvi(1860),250
24. MC, 4:v:1820
25. H, xi(1833),96
26. MW,xxxvi(1860),250
27. QMM,i(1819),400
28. QMM,i(1819),402
29. see LSA,ii,89-91
30. QMM,i(1819),406
31. QMM,i(1919),400
32. QMM,ii(1820),383
33. QMM,ii(1820),383
34. LM,iii(1821),448
35. LM,i(1820),89
36. MC,13:i:1820
37. QMM,ii(1820),376
38. LM, i(1820)444
39. QMM, ii(1820),384
40. MC,13:iii:1820
41. T, 22:iv:1820
42. QMM,ii(1820),384

43. QMM, iii(1820),385
44. Cox, Musical Recollections, i,111
45. MC,13:iii:1820
46. QMM,ii(1820),383
47. MC,4:v:1820
48. see MW,xxxvi(1860),250
49. QMM,ii(1820),384
50. MC,28:iii:1820
51. QMM,ii(1820),384
52. MC, 12:vi:1820
53. QMM,ii(1820),385
54. see MW; xxxvi(1860),250

Chapter 2

1. Quoted in MW,xviii(1843),228-229
2. Royal College of Music, Parry Library, published by Lavenu as a septet
3. S, xvi(1843),636
4. QMM, v(1823),243
5. H, i(1823),73
6. H, i(1823),86
7. LSA, i,130
8. H, i(1823), 101
9. QMM, v(1823), 403
10. QMM, v(1823),486
11. H, i(1823),129
12. H, i(1823),74
13. Ath, iii(1830),442
14. QMM, vi(1824),237
15. H, ii(1824),100
16. H, ii(1824),122
17. H, ii(1824),144
18. H, ii(1824),215
19. H, ii(1824),229
20. LSA, ii,57
21. RA, vii(1826),53
22. H, iii(1825), 191
23. RA, vii(1826),353
24. H, iv(1826),36
25. H, iii(1825),139
26. RA, vii(1826),353
27. Cazalet The History of the Royal Academy of Music, p.211
28. H, ii(1824),122
29. H,iii(1825),132
30. H, iv(1826),167
31. RA, vii(1826),353
32. H, vi(1828),166
33. H, ix(1831),98
34. Ath, xix(1846),434
35. A, v(1830),508
36. A, vi(1831),172
37. H, iv(1826), 106
38. H, iv(1826), 184
39. H,vi(1828),138
40. H, iv(1826), 106
41. H, v(1827),57
42. H, viii(1830),174
43. H, vi(1828),115
44. H, vii(1829),174
45. A, iv(1829),396
46. H, viii(1830), 304
47. H, xi(1833),82

48. Preface to Taylor's edition of Spohr's Crucifixion, London, 1836.
49. Ath, iii(1830),252
50. Parke, op.cit, ii,160
51. Smart Papers, iv,102ff
52. QMM, ix(1827) & Holmes,Ramble, p277
53. A, v(1830),524-525
54. A, vi(1831),765
55. A, vi(1831),140
56. H, ix(1831),1

Chapter 3

1. Speyer, Wilhelm Speyer der Liedercomponist, p.95
2. H, v(1827),55
3. H, v(1827),72
4. A, iv(1829),749
5. QMM, ix(1827),513
6. H, viii(1830),216
7. S, xvi(1843),636
6. Cox, Musical Recollections, i,209
9. ibid, i,209
10. ibid, i,209
11. H, ix(1831),98
12. Patterson, Oratorio, p.120
13. Banister, Macfarren, p.303
14. H, viii(1830),466
15. S, xvi(1843), 636
16. Chorley, Music & Manners, p.237
17. Preface to Taylor's edition of The Crucifixion
18. H, x(1832),250
19. MW, i(1836),141
20. Hogarth, Musical History, ii,187
21. LSA, ii,253
22. Cox, Musical Recollections,i,210
23. MC, 6:iv:1831
24. T, 6:iv:1831
25. A, vi(1831),296
26. H, ix(1831), 129
27. A, vi(1831),249
28. MW, xxviii(1853),510
29. T, 6:iv:1831
30. MC,6:iv:1831
31. A, vi(1831),296
32. Cox, Musical Recollections,i,211

Chapter 4

1. MC, 16:ix:1836
2. Ath, xiii(1840),421
3. H, viii(1830),83
4. Ath,iii(1830),43
5. H, ix(1831),71
6. Ath, iv(1831),349
7. A, vi(1831),364
8. H, ix(1831),153
9. Ath, ix(1836),276
10. MC, 21:III:1832
11. T, 21:III:1832
12-
15. MC, 21:111:1832
16. An, viii(1839),483

17. MW, vii(1837),164
18. Ath, vi(1833),140
19. H, xi(1833),81
20. Ath, vi(1833),284
21. H, xi(1833), 134
22. H, xi(1833),82
23. Ath, vii(1834),771
24. Hogarth, The Philharmonic Society,p.64
25. MC, 24:II:1835
26. Ath, viii(1835), 171
27. Ath, viii(1835), 172
28. Ath, viii(1835), 172
29. S, viii(1835), 208
30. NMM, xliv(1835),294
31. A, x(1835),137
32. Moscheles, C. Life of Moscheles (trans. Coleridge),i,313
33. Gotch (ed.) Mendelssohn & his friends in Kensington, p.185
34. Quoted in MW, iv(1837), 174
35. Ath. viii(1835), 396
36. H, ix(1831), 153
37. S, ix(1836), 272
38. Ath, x(1837), 709
39. MC, 15:III:1836
40. MC, 21:IV:1836
41. S, ix(1836), 272
42. T, 16:IX:1836
43. T, 3:X:1836
44. MC, 16:IX:1836
45. MW, iii(1836) 24
46. MC, 26:IX:1836
47. S, ix(1836),916
48. MW, iii(1836), 46
49. T, 7:X:1836
50. An, vi(1836),154
51. MC, 28:III:1837
52. T, 28:III:1837
53. An, vii(1838), 223
54. Hodges, op.cit., p.53
55. MW, v(1837), 47
56. LSA, ii,218
57. Quoted in LSA, ii,218
58. MC, 19:IX:1839
59. MC, 21:IX:1839
60. T, 21:IX:1839
61. MW xxiv(1849),583
62. An, ix(1839), 485
63. MW, iii(1836)20
64. MW, xii(1839), 88
65. MW, iii(1936), 21
66. MW, ix(1838), 191
67. A, xii(1837), 809
68. MM, i(1835), 66
69. MW, ix(1838), 77
70. An, viii(1839), 486
71. Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.158
72. ibid, p.226
73. An, i(1834),iii
74. MMLJ, i(1830), 1
75. AN, viii(1828), 110

76. See MH, 24:II:1835
77. Cranfield, The Press and Society, p.122
78. NMM, xliii(1835), 148
79. An, ix(1839), 294
80. T, 17:IX:1839
81. MW, viii(1838), 8
82. T, I:X:1836
83. T, 28:III:1837
84. T, 3:X:1836
85. An, vi(1836), 40
86. An, vi(1836), 46
87. An, vi(1836), 233
88. An, vi(1836), 233
89. An, viii(1838), 310
90. QMM, v(1822), 252
91. H, vi(1828), 85
92. H, ix(1831), 142
93. H, xi(1833), 46
94. NMM, xliii(1835), 148
95. A, iv(1829), 749
96. A, iv(1829), 733
97. Macfarren, Musical History, p.133
98. Banister, Macfarren, p.217
99. MW, xxxvi(1858), 92
100. MW, xxxvi(1854), 252
101. See Davison, From Mendelssohn to Wagner, p.15
102. MM., i(1835), 39
103. MC, 16:IX:1836
104. Ath, xiii(1840), 421
105. A, xii(1837), 809
106. H, ix(1831), 153
107. H, x(1832), 116
108. A, iv(1829), 172
109. MC, 4:II:1835
110. MC, 9:VI:1835
111. T, 31:III:1837
112. MC, 12:IV:1836
113. Ath, ix(1836), 276
114. MW, iii(1836), 20
115. A, x(1836), 20
116. A, xii(1837), 809
117. MC, 20:IX:1839
118. MM, i(1835), 38
119. MW, iii(1836), 22
120. An, vi(1836), 45
121. An, viii(1839), 483
122. H, vi(1828), 276
123. Hogarth, op.cit., ii,187
124. MC, 21:IX:1839
125. An, vi(1836), 155
126. MW, iii(1836), 188
127. MW, ii(1836), 194
128. MW, ix(1838), 191
129. Ath. v(1832), 326
130. MC, 19:IX:1836
131. An, vii(1837), 219
132. MM, i(1835), 39
133. Ath, xii(1839), 407
134. Ath, xiii(1840), 260
135. Ath, x(1837), 440
136. Ath, xi(1838), 242
137. Ath, xi(1838), 204
138. MC, 1:II:1838
139. MW, i(1836), 159

140. MW, ii(1836), 54
141. MW, iii(1836), 24
142. MW, ii(1836), 194ff & iii(1836),17ff
143. MW, ii(1836), 195
144. A, vii(1831), 249
145. A, xii(1837), 233
146. MW, ii(1836), 197
147. MW, ix(1838),100
148. An, viii(1837), 318
149. An, viii(1837), 319
150. Ath, xi(1838), 91
151. Ath, xi(1838), 172
152. MW, vii(1837), 250
153. An, viii(1837), 318
154. T, 21:IX:1839
155. LSA, ii, 148
156. Ath, v(1832), 140
157. T, 25:V:1835
158. S, viii(1835), 513
159. An vi(1836), 46
160. A, xv(1840), 343
161. A, xi(1836), 311
162. Ath, x(1837), 268
163. Ath, xi(1838), 413
164. NMM, xliii(1835), 292
165. An, viii(1838), 321
166. MW, i(1836), 173
167. Ath, xii(1839), 173
168. Quoted in MW, viii(1838), 176
16 . MC, 23:IX:1839
170. MC, 21:IX:1839
171. Quoted in MW, xii(1839), 369
172. T, 23:IX:1839
173. MW, xii(1839), 369
174. MW, xii(1839), 338
175. T, 21:IX:1839
176. MC, 19:IX:1839
177. MC, 21:IX;1839
178. MC, 20:IX:1839

Chapter 5

1. MW, xviii(1843), 253
2. MW, xviii(1843), 294
3. MW, ix(1838), 38
4. S, xiii(1840), 254
5. MW, xiii(1840), 83
6. A, xv(1840), 91
7. Ath, xiii(1840), 219
8. A, xv(1840), 172
9. MW, xiii(1840), 161
10. S, xiii(1840), 254
11. S, xiii(1840), 351
12. MW, xiii(1840), 225
13. MC, 7:IV:1840
14. A, xv(1840), 236
15. MC, 7:IV:1840
16. A, xv(1840), 236
17. S, xiii(1840), 351
18. Ath, xiii(1840), 300

19. An, ix(1839), 295
20. A, xv(1840), 343
21. S, xiii(1840), 493
22. T, 22:V:1840
23. E, iii(1840), 417
24. T, 22:V:1840
25. S, xiii(1840), 493
26. T, 22:V:1840
27. MC, 22:V:1840
28. MW, xiii(1840), 332-333
29. Ath, xiii(1840), 421
30. MW, xvi(1841), 357
31. S, xiii(1840), 493
32. A, xv(1840),343
33. Ath, xiii(1840), 557
34. MC, 22:VI:1840
35. A, xv(1840), 407
36. S, xiii(1840), 590
37. MC, 22:VI:1840
38. B, ii(1840), 590
39. T, 19:VI:1840
40. A, xv(1840), 155
41. A, xvi (1841), 107
42. MW, xvi(1841), 355
43. MW, xvii(1842), 51
44. S, xv(1842), 399
45. A, xvii(1842), 266
46. MW, xvii(1842), 124
47. Ath, xv(1842), 365
48. MW, xvi(1841), 426
49. MW, xvii(1842), 90-91
50. Ath, xv(1842), 507
51. FCQR, ii(1843), 149
52. S, xv(1842), 541
53. Ath, xv(1842), 507
54. MW, xvii(1842), 103
55. S, xv(1842), 541
56. MW, xvii(1842), 204
57. Ath, xxii(1849), 521
58. MW, xvii(1842), 180
59. S, xv(1842), 492
60. MW, xviii(1843), 126
61. MW, xvi(1841), 156
62. MW, xvi(1841), 234
63. MW, xiii(1840), 358
64. MW, xvii(1842), 14
65. MW, xvii(1842), 77
66. MW, xvii(1841), 348
68. MW, xviii(1843), 38
69. MW, xviii(1843), 183
70. MW, xviii(1843), 196
71. S, xiv(1841), 1021
72. T, 21:X:1841
73. MW, xvi(1841), 264
74. FCQR, ii(1843), 143-144
75. S xiv(1841), 1190
76. Ath, xv (1842), 774
77. P, iii(1842), 158
78. T, 14:IX:1842
79. T, 15:IX:1842
80. MH, 17:IX:1842

81. T, 17:IX:1842
82. MC, 17:IX:1842
83. T, 17:IX:1842
84. MW, xviii(1842), 299.
85. Ath, xv(1842), 893
86. MW, xviii(1843), 6
87. MW, xviii(1843), 173
88. MW, xviii(1843), 199
89. T, 4:VI:1843
90. Ath, xvi(1843), 614
91. Ath, xvi (1843), 653
92. ME, ii(1843), 253
93. MW, xviii(1843),259
94. LSA, ii, 250
95. LSA, ii, 252
96. S, xvi(1843), 636
97. MC, 4:vii:1843
98. T, 4:VII:1843
99. ILN, iii(1843), 42
100. MW, xviii(1843), 227
101. T, 4:VII:1843
102. MW, xviii(1843), 235
103. ILN, iii(1843), 42
104. Ath, xvi (1843), 637
105. MW, xviii(1843), 235
106. T, 4:VII:1843
107. MW, xviii(1843), 227
108. Ath, xvi(1843), 637
109. MW, xvii(1843), 228
110. MW, xviii(1843), 235
111. Ath, xvi(1843), 637
112. MC, 22:VI:1843
113. MC, 4:VII:1843
114. S, xvi(1843), 636
115. ME, ii,(1843), 264
116. MW, xviii(1843), 230
117. Quoted in MW, xviii(1843), 235
118. MW, xviii(1843), 235-236
119. ILN, iii(1843), 45
120. Quoted in MW, xviii(1843), 235
121. MW, xviii(1843), 236
122. T, 8:VII:1843
123. MC, 8:VII:1843
124. LSA, ii, 251
125. LSA, ii, 253
126. MC, 22:VII:1843
127. MW, xviii(1843), 253
128. LSA, ii, 254
129. ME, ii(1843), 288
130. T, 22:VII:1843
131. MC, 22:VII:1843
132. MW, xviii(1843),246
133. MW, xviii(1843), 246
134. Ath, xvi (1843), 653
135. LSA, ii, 255
136. ILN, iii,(1843), 45
137. Quoted in MW, xviii(1843), 231
138. MW, xix(1844), 158
139. M, i(1844), 71
140. M, i(1844), 83
141. MW, xviii(1843), 373ff
142. ME, ii(1843), 342

143. St, 4:VII:1843
144. Quoted in MW, xviii(1843), 228
145. MW, xx(1845), 422
146. MW, xx(1845), 171
147. Ath, xx(1847), 802
148. S, xix(1846), 187
149. Moscheles, F. Letters of Felix Mendelssohn, pp.220-221
150. ME, ii(1843), 253
151. Quoted in ME, iii(1844), 32
152. Anon, Music, London 1852 (reprinted from The Quarterly Review)
153. Ath, xvi (1843), 220
154. Ath, xxix(1856), 594
155. MW, xiv(1840), 293
156. Quoted in ME, i(1842), 83
157. ME, i(1842), 131
158. MW, xix(1844), 411
159. Ath.xix(1846), 1305
160. Ath, xvi(1843), 965
161. Ath, xvi(1843), 1094
162. MW, xviii(1843) 406
163. MW, xix(1844), 37
164. MW, xviii(1843), 351
165. MW, xxii(1847), 29
166. Weber, Music & the Middle Class, p.159
167. MH, 26:III:1844
168. MW, xix(1844), 99
169. MC, 10:VII:1845
170. Ath. xii(1839), 173
171. Ath, xx(1847), 795
172. S, xix(1846), 139
173. MW, xix(1844), 363
174. MW, xix(1844), 36
175. MW, xxiii(1848), 541
176. MW, xx(1845), 157
177. Quoted in MW, xx(1845), 329
178. Ath, xviii(1845), 696
179. MP, 17:III:1846
180. ME, ii(1843), 157
181. ME, ii(1843), 85
182. MW, xx(1845), 198
183. St, 26:III:1844
184. S, xvii(1844), 297
185. MP, 26:III:1844
186. ILN iv(1844), 202
187. MP, 24:VI:1845
188. Ath, xviii(1845), 637
189. St, 24:VI:1845
190. GG, ii(1845), 393
191. MP, 21:IV:1846
192. DN, 21:IV:1846
193. S, xix (1846), 402
194. MC, 21:IV:1846
195. MH, 21:IV:1846
196. ILN, viii(1846), 274
197. MW, xxii(1847), 358
198. MH, 25:V:1847
199. DN, 25:V:1847
200. Hogarth op.cit. pp, 64-65
201. MP, 25:V:1847
202. MW, xx(1845), 446

203. DN, 10:VII:1847
204. MP, 10:VII.1847
205. MC, 10:VII:1847
206. ILN, xi(1847), 42
207. Ath, xx(1847), 42
208. MH, 10:VII:1847
209. MC, 24: VII:1847
210. DN, 24:VII:1847
211. ILN, xi(1847), 59
212. S, xx(1847), 709
213. A, xxii(1847), 493
214. A, xxii(1847), 492.

Chapter 6

1. S, xx(1847), 1098
2. MC, 2:V:1848
3. Ath, xxi(1848), 467
4. S, xxi(1848), 438
5. MC, 2:V:1848.
6. DN, 2:V:1848
7. T, 2:V:1848
8. Ath, xxii(1849), 521
9. DN, 15:V:1849
10. ILN, xiv(1849), 325
11. Ath, xxiii(1850), 401
12. MC, 9:IV:1850
13. DN, 9:IV:1850
14. MW, xxv(1850),226
15. MH, 9:IV:1850
16. MW, xxiii(1848), 168
17. MW, xxv(1850), 254
18. MW, xxv(1850), 147
19. DN, 26:XI:1850
20. S, xxiii(1850), 1137
21. Ath, xxiii(1850), 137
22. DMR, xi(1852), 65
23. Quoted in Church, The Great Victorian Boom, p.25
24. Ath, xxiii(1850), 212
25. MP, 26:XI:1850
25. Ath, xxiii(1850), 1256
27. for example; DN 26:XI:1850
28. MW, xxv (1850), 765-6
29. MP, 26:XI:1850
30. S, xxiii(1850), 1137
31. MW, xxv(1850)766
32. MW, xxv(1850), 787-8
33. from The Times, quoted in MW, xxvi(1851), 277
34. Ath, xxiv(1851), 483
35. MW, xxvi(1851), 231
36, MC, 13:V:1851
37. T, 13:V:1851
38. Ath, xxv(1852), 707
39. S, xxiii(1850), 132
40. Ath, xxv(1852), 178
41. MW, xxvii(1852), 354-5
42. MH, 1:VI:1852
43. MC, 1:VI:1852
44. DN, 26:XI:1850
45. MW, xxviii(1853), 510
46. MC, 8:1v:1851
47. Ath, xxv(1852), 730
48. T, 29:VI:1852
49. Ath, xxv(1852), 756

50. MW, xxvii(1852), 435
51. MC, 6:VII:1852
52. DN, 6:VII:1852
53. MP, 6:VII:1852
54. S, XXV(1852), 655
55. MH, 6:VII:1852)
56. MC, 6:VII:1852
57. MC, 16:VII:1852
58. MH, 16:VII:1852
59. MW, xxvii(1852), 458
60. CMM, i(1852), 68
61. MW, xxvii(1852), 458
62. MW, xxvii(1852), 470
63. MH, 16:VII:1852
64. S, xxv(1852), 679
65. MP, 16:VII:1852
66. DN, 16:VII:1852
67. An, viii(1838), 311
68. MW, xxiii(1848),221
69. ILN, x(1847), 203
70. Ath, xxix (1856), 625
71. MW, xxviii(1853), 511-512
72. M, i(1844), 25
73. M, i(1844), 83
74. M, i(1844), 25
75. F, ii(1853), 163
76. MW, xxviii(1853), 530
77. MC, 8:VIII:1853
78. F, ii(1853), 163
79. MP, 8:VIII:1853
80. MW, xxviii(1853), 512
81. MW, xxxv(1859), 713
82. MW, xxviii(1853, 443
83. Ath, xxvi(1853), 865
84. MW, xxviii(1853), 150
85. MW, xxviii(1853), 415
86. Ath, xxvi(1853), 804
87. CMM, ii(1853), 70
88. DN, 9:VII:1853
89. MC, 9:VII:1853
90. MW, xxviii(1853), 446
91. MH, 9:VII:1853
92. MP, 9:VII:1853
93. T, 5:iv:1853
94. RMU, i(1845), 17
95. Chorley, op.cit., ii, 28
96. Ath, xxvii(1854), 381
97. MW, xxix(1854), 230
98. T, 26:VI:1855
99. MW, xxix(1854), 247
100. MW, xxix(1854), 252
101. RMU, x(1854), 6
102. MW, xxix(1854), 252
103. MW, xxviii(1853), 443
104. EX, 8:IV:1854.
105. MW, xxix(1854), 252-3
106. See MW, xxx(1855)
107. T, 14:iii:1855
108. MW, xxx(1855), 187

109. MW, xxix(1854), 611
110. MW, xxx(1855), 199
111. Chorley, Modern German Music, ii,80-81
112. MW, xix(1854), 252
113. MW, xix(1854), 402
114. MW. xxxi(1856), 283
115. MW, xxxii(1857), 425
116. DN, 30:VI:1857
117. RMU, viii(1852),11

Chapter 7

1. Ath, xxxii(1859), 745
2. MW, xxxiv(1859), 713
3. A, xxxiv(1859), 416
4. MT, ix(1859), 169
5. MW, xxxiv(1859), 713-714
6. Revue et Gazette Musicale xxvi(1859), 378
7. LSA, pp. I-II
8. Schlüter, op.cit., p. 309
9. ibid, p.311
10. Hauptmann, Letters of a Leipzig Cantor, ii, 166
11. Schlüter, op.cit., pp,310-311
12. Phillips, op.cit., ii, 31
13. Ella, Musical Sketches, p. 36
14. Wylde, op.cit., p. 59
15. Adye, op.cit., p. 31
16. ibid, pp, 34-35
17. Haweis, op.cit., p. 517
18. Cox, op.cit, i, 112
19. ibid, i, 120
20. Hullah, op. cit.,p.184
21. MMR, ix(1879), 47
22. Ritter, op.cit., p. 428
23. Naumann, op.cit., ii,992
24. Brown, op.cit., p, 572
25. Glover, op.cit., ii,239
26. MS, (1884), 244
27. ibid, (1884), 226
28. Kuhe, op.cit., p.240
30. Hallé, op.cit., p.11
31. Glover, op.cit., i, 203
32. Macfarren, W., op.cit., p.117
33. MT, xxxviii(1887), 151
34. Shaw, Music in London, i, 35; & i,84
35. MMR, xxi(1891), 4
36. Henderson in Famous Composers & their Works (ed. Paine, Thomas & Klauser), ii, 382
37. Bannister, op.cit., pp.191-192
38. ibid., p.187
39. MMR, Li(1921), 248
40. Eaton, op.cit., pp.113-114
41. Speyer, op.cit., pp,102-103
42. Scholes, op.cit. p.978
43. Hadow, op.cit., i, 46
44. Nieks, op.cit., p.152
45. Fuller-Maitland, op.cit., p.71
46. Parry, op.cit., P77
47. Colles, op.cit., iii, 130
48. Stanford & Forsyth, op.cit., p. 274
49. MMR, Li, (1921), 250

50. Newman, op.cit., p.292
51. Hull, op.cit., p.183
52. Abraham, op.cit. 9.31
53. Lang, op.cit., p.821
54. Musical Opinion, Lxiv(1940), 101
55. The Strad, Lxi(1951), 326ff
56. The Musical Quarterly, xxxix(1953), 234
57. The Listener, lxii(1959), 654
58. Musical Opinion lxii(1959), 153
59. Longyear, op.cit., pp.36-40

Chapter 8

1. A, vi(1831), 249
2. An, viii(1837), 318
3. Ath, xxiii(1850), 401
4. Adye Musical Notes, p.31
5. Brown, op.cit., p.572
6. Naumann, History of Music, ii, 955-956
7. Eaton, Musical Criticism & Biography, p.115
8. Naumann, op.cit. ii, 955
9. Hauptmann, Letters of a Leipzig Cantor, ii, 227
10. Schumann, in Plantinga, Schumann as critic, p.153
11. Banister, Interludes, p. 139
12. RMU viii(1852), 11
13. Hallé, Life and Letters, p. 11
14. Hauptmann, Letters of a Liepzig Cantor, i, 185
15. Hanslick, Music Criticism, (Trans. Pleasants) p. 33
16. Schumann, (Trans. Ritter) Music & Musicians p. 371
17. LSA, i, 129
18. LSA, i, 129-130
19. Hauptmann, Letters of a Leipzig Cantor, i, 107
20. MW, viii(1838), 146
21. RMU, viii(1852), 11
22. Chorley, Modern German Music, ii, 80
23. Hauptmann, Letters of a Leipzig Cantor, i, 28
24. Iris im Gebiete der Tonkunst, xii(1841), 47
25. Ath, xvi(1843), 293
26. Ath, xvi(1843), 421
27. LSA, i, 5
28. LSA, i, 6
29. LSA, i, 11
30. Hauptmann, Letters of a Leipzig Cantor, ii, 138
31. LSA, i, 12
32. LSA, i, 130
33. LSA, i, 154
34. LSA, i, 12
35. See Thayer, Life of Ludwig van Beethoven, iii, 203
36. LSA, i, 61
37. Spohr, Violin School (trans. John Bishop) p. 184
38. ibid, p.196
39. LSA, ii, 58
40. Flesch, The Art of Violin Playing, ii, 193
41. Chopin, Selected correspondence (trans. Headley) p.55
42. see LSA, i, 74
43. Quoted in LSA, i, 150-151.
44. Diary of Sir C.H.H. Parry, 6 Jan., 1866
45. Ath, xiii(1840), 421-422
46. Schumann, (trans. Ritter) Music & Musicians, p.312
47. Hauptmann, Letters of a Leipzig Cantor, i, 66
48. ibid., ii, 98
49. ibid., i, 201

50. ibid., i, 226
51. MW, ii(1836), 195
52. Swalin, The Violin Concerto, p. 9
53. Ath, xiii(1840), 421

Chapter 9

1. Spark, op.cit., pp.55-56
2. MC, 8:VII:1835
3. A, vi(1831), 570
3. MW, iii(1836), 21-22
5. Quoted in Dictionary of National Biography, v, 91
6. Dictionary of National Biography, v, 91
7. MW, ii(1836), 76
8. MC, 26:IX:1836
9. MW, iii(1836), 22
10. MW, vii(1837), 121
11. A, xii(1837), 189
12. Spark, Henry Smart, p.14
13. MW, iv(1836), 88
14. MW, viii(1838), 122
15. MW, viii(1838), 122
16. Spark, Henry Smart, p. 137
17. T, 10:IX:1864
18. Rockstro, in Famous Composers & their Works, iv, 883
19. Fuller-Maitland, English Music, p.115
20. Quoted in MW, xii(1839), 249
21. Bennett, Life of W. Sterndale Bennett, p.117
22. ibid, p. 120
23. MM, i(1835), 187
24. MM, i(1835), 107
25. MM, i(1835), 107
26. Spark, Musical Memories, p. 51
27. MW, xi(1839), 211
28. ME, ii(1843), 90
29. MC, 8:VI:1838
30. MW, i(1836), 143
31. MW, xvii(1842), 4
32. MW, ii(1836), 106
33. MW, xix(1844), 411
34. Bennett, Life of W. Sterndale Bennett, p. 120
35. Wylde, Music & its Art-Mysteries, p. 100
36. McVeagh, Edward Elgar his Life & Music, pp. 189-91
37. MW, xviii (1843), 253

Appendix A

1. MMLJ, i(1830), 19
2. Quoted in MW, xviii(1843), 235
3. H, viii(1830), 216
4. Taylor, A Memoir of the Taylor Family of Norwich, p. 27
5. Eaton, Musical Criticism & Biography, p. 242
6. MW, xviii(1843), 236
7. Eaton, Musical Criticism & Biography, p.251
8. MW, xiv(1839), 418
9. MW, xviii(1843), 236
10. Quoted in MW, xviii(1843), 236
11. MW, xviii(1843), 236
12. Quoted in MW, xviii(1843), 235
13. Quoted in Eaton, Musical Criticism & Biography, p. 254
14. ibid., pp. 248-250

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Section A lists newpapers and periodicals used in the preparation of this thesis. It includes the names of music critics whom there is good reason to believe were writing for them at particular dates. In some cases it is only possible to be certain that a critic was associated with a journal in a specific year and no information has come to light to indicate how long before or after that date he was writing for it. In other cases an educated guess may be made and in these instances a question mark precedes the date.

Section B lists, in alphabetical order of authors, all other books and articles which have been used.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Section A

Newspapers and Periodicals

Newspapers

The Daily News (DN) — G. Hogarth 1846-66

The Morning Chronicle (MC) — G. Hogarth ?1833 - ?1845; C.L. Gruneisen ?1845 - ?1856

The Morning Herald (MH) — Feeney 1845

The Morning Post (MP) — J. Ella 1828 - 1842; J. Parry 1834 - 1848; C.L. Gruneisen 1844; M. Barnett 1845

The Standard (ST)

The Times (T) — C. Kenney 1840 - ?1845; J.W. Davison 1846 - 1875

Periodicals

The Analyst (An)

The Athenaeum (Ath) — J. Ella 1830 - 1834; H.F. Chorley 1835 - 1868

The Atlas (A) — E. Holmes 1828 - ?1836; H. Smart 1839

The Britannia (B) — C.L. Gruneisen 1843 1845

The British and Foreign Review (BFR) — E. Taylor 1845

Cocks Musical Miscellany (CMM)

The Dramatic and Musical Review (DMR) — J.W. Davison ?1842; J. Lovell Phillips 1844; F.N. Crouch 1844

The Era (E) — J.W. Davison 1839

The Examiner (Ex)

The Field (F)	C.L. Gruneisen 1954
The Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review (FCQR)	
The Great Gun (GG)	C.L. Gruneisen 1844 - 1845
The Harmonicon (H)	W. Ayreton 1823 - 1833 G. Hogarth ?1830 - 1833
The Illustrated London News (ILN)	C.L. Gruneisen ?1842 - ?1853 G. Hogarth ?1853 - 1870
The Literary Gazette (LG)	G. French Flowers 1845
The London Magazine (LM)	
The Maestro (M)	C.L. Gruneisen 1844
The Mönthly Musical Record (MMR)	
The Monthly Musical and Literary Journal (MMLJ)	
The Musical Examiner (ME)	J.W. Davison 1842 - 1844 H. Smart G.A. Macfarren E.J. Loder
The Musical Herald (MusH)	G. Hogarth 1846
The Musical Magazine (MM)	J. Valentine 1835 C.H. Purday 1835
The Musical Standard (MS)	
The Musical Times (MT)	V. Novello E. Holmes
The Musical World (MW)	J. Ella ?1836 C. Cowden Clarke 1836 - 1838 E. Holmes 1838 - 40 G. Macfarren sen. 1839-43 J.W. Davison 1843-85
The New Monthly Magazine (NMM)	
Punch (P)	
The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review (QMM)	R.M. Bacon 1818 - 1828 E. Holmes 1827
The Record of the Musical Union (RMU)	J. Ella 1845-1880
The Repository of Arts (RA)	
The Spectator (S)	E. Taylor 1829 - 1843 E. Holmes ?1843-
The Sunday Times (ST)	J. Parry 1839

Section B

Abraham, Gerald Ernest H. A hundred years of music, London, 1938

Adye, Willett. Musical Notes, London, 1869

Anon. Music (Reprinted from The Quarterly Review) London, 1852

Anon. Music and its influence, London: Hamilton, Adams & Co, 1846

Armstrong, James A. 'The decline of Spohr', The Strad, lxi(1951), 326ff

Ashworth, A. Hargreaves. 'The Last Judgement, character in choral music', Musical Opinion, lxiv(1940), 101

Banister, Henry Charles. Interludes, seven lectures delivered between the years 1891 & 1897 (collected and ed. Stewart Macpherson). London, 1898

Banister, Henry Charles. George Alexander Macfarren, his life, works and influence. London, 1891

Bennett, J.R. Sterndale. The Life of William Sterndale Bennett, Cambridge, 1907

Brown, James D. Biographical Dictionary of Musicians, London, 1886

Carse, Adam von A. The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz, Cambridge, 1948

Cazalet, William Wahab. The History of the Royal Academy of Music, London, 1854

Chopin, Frédéric François. Selected correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin Abridged from Fryderyk Chopin's correspondence, collected and annotated by B.E. Sydow, tr. and ed. by A. Headley. London, 1962

Chorley, Henry Fothergill. Autobiography, Memoir, and Letters (compiled by H.G. Hewlett). London, 1873

Chorley, Henry Fothergill. Modern German Music; recollections and criticisms London, 1854

Chorley, Henry Fothergill. Music and Manners in France and Germany. London, 184

Chorley, Henry Fothergill. Thirty Years' Musical Recollections. London, 1862

Church, Roy Anthony. The Great Victorian Boom, 1850-1873. London, 1975

Colles, Henry Cope. The Growth of Music. pt. III. Oxford, 1916.

Cox, J.B.) /published Anon./ Musical Recollections of the last Half Century. London, 1872.

Cranfield, Geoffrey Alan. The Press & Society from Caxton to Northcliffe. London, 1978.

Crowest, Frederick. The Great Tone-Poets, (5th edition), London, 1885.

Davison, Henry. Music during the Victorian era. From Mendelssohn to Wagner...being the Memoirs of J.W. Davison London, 1912

Dictionary of National Biography (ed. L. Stephen & S. Lee). London, 1908

Eaton, Thomas Damant. Musical Criticism & Biography. London, 1872

Ella, John. Musical Sketches abroad and at home, (3rd edition). London, 1878

Flesch, Carl. The Art of Violin Playing, (2nd edition, trans. F.H. Martens) New York, 1939

Foster, Myles Birket. History of the Philharmonic Society of London: 1813-1912. London, 1912.

Fuller-Maitland, John Alexander. English Music in the nineteenth century. London & New York, 1902

Gál, Hans. The Musician's World; Great Composers in their Letters. London, 1965.

Glover, William. The Memoirs of a Cambridge Chorister. London, 1885

Glover, William. Reminiscences of half a century. London, 1889

Gotch, Rosamund Brunel (ed.). Mendelssohn & his friends in Kensington. London, 1934.

Gray, Cecil William T. The History of Music. London, 1928

Hadow, Sir William Henry. English Music. London, 1931

Hallé, Sir Charles. Life and Letters of Sir Charles Hallé. (ed. C.E. & M. Hallé). London, 1896.

Hanslick, Edward. Music Criticism 1849-99. (trans. H. Pleasants). Harmondsworth Penguin, 1963

Hauptmann, Moritz. The Letters of a Liepzig Cantor, (ed. A. Schöne & F. Hiller, tr. A.D. Coleridge). London, 1892.

Haweis, Rev. Hugh Reginald. Music and Morals, (5th edition). London, 1874.

Hodges, Edward. An apology for church music and musical festivals, in answer to the animadversions of the Standard and Record. London, 1834

Hogarth, George. The Philharmonic Society of London. London,1862

Hogarth, George. Musical History, Biography and Criticism, (2nd edition) London, 1838

Holmes, Edward /published anonymously/. A Ramble among the Musicians of Germany. London, 1828.

Hull, Arthur Eaglefield. Music: Classical, Romantic & Modern. London, 1927.

Hullah, John Pyke. The History of Modern Music; a Course of Lectures Delivered at the Royal Institute of Great Britain. London, 1875.

Klein, Hermann. Thirty Years of Musical Life in London 1870-1900. London, 1903

Kuhe, Wilhelm. My Musical Recollections. London, 1896.

Lang, P.H. 'Editorial'. The Musical Quarterly, xxxix(1953), 238

Linley, George. Musical Cynics of London (2nd edition). London, 1862.

Longyear, Rey M. Nineteenth-century Romanticism in Music. Englewood Cliffs, 1969

Lunn, Henry Charles. Musings of a Musician. London, 1846.

McVeagh, Diana M. Edward Elgar his Life and Music. London, 1955

Macfarren, Sir George Alexander. Musical History Briefly Narrated. Edinburgh, 1885

Macfarren, Walter. Memories, an autobiography. London, 1905

Mellers, Wilfred. Romanticism & the twentieth century. London, 1962

Moscheles, Charlotte. Life of Moscheles. (trans. A.D. Coleridge). London, 1873.

Moscheles, Felix. Letters of Felix Mendelssohn to Ignaz & Charlotte Moscheles. (trans. F. Moscheles). London, 1889

Naumann, Emil. History of Music, (trans. F. Praeger & ed. Sir. F.A. Gore Ousley). London, 1882-1886.

Nettel, Reginald. The Orchestra in England. London, 1946.

Newman, Ernest. A Musical Critic's Holiday. London, 1925.

Niecks, Frederick. Programme Music in the Last Four Centuries. London, 1906

Paine, J.K., Thomas, T., Klauser, K. (eds). Famous Composers and their Works. London, 1895.

Parke, William Thomas. Musical Memoirs; comprising an account of the general state of music in England, from...1784 to 1830. London, 1830.

Parry, Sir Charles Hubert Hastings. Summary of the History and Development of Medieval and Modern European Music, (new revised edition). London, 1905.

Parry, Sir C.H.H. MS Diary (in the possession of Lord Ponsonby).

Patterson, Annie W. The Story of Oratorio. London, 1902

Phillips, Henry. Musical & Personal Recollections. London, 1864.

Plantinga, Leon B. Schumann as critic. Yale 1967

Q. You have heard of them. New York, 1854.

Ritter, Frederic Louis. The History of Music, (2nd edition). London, 1880

Shaw, George Bernard. Music in London. London ,1932

Schletterer, H.M. Historisches und Systematisches Verzeichnis der Werke von Ludwig Spohr. Leipzig, 1881

Schlüter, Joseph. History of Music, (trans. R. Tubbs). London, 1865.

Scholes, Percy, A. The Oxford Companion to Music. (10th edition). London, 1970.

Schumann, Robert. Music and Musicians; essays and criticisms (trans. and annotated by F.R. Ritter). London, 1877.

Smart, Sir George. Leaves from the Journals of Sir George Smart, (ed. H.B. & C.L.E. Cox). London, 1907.

Smart, Sir George. Papers in the British Library, department of Manuscripts.

Spark, Frederick R. Memories of my Life. Leeds, 1913.

Spark, William. Henry Smart: his life and works. London, 1881

Spark, William. Musical Reminiscences: past and present, London, 1892.

Spark, William. Musical Memories. London, 1888

Speyer, Edward. My Life & Friends. London, 1937

Speyer, Edward. Wilhelm Speyer der Liedercomponist. Munich, 1925.

Spohr, Louis. Louis Spohr's Autobiography. London, 1865.

Spohr, Louis. Violin School. (trans. John Bishop). London, Gould & Bolttler. (c.1850)

Stanford, Sir Charles Villiers & Forsyth, Cecil. A History of Music. London, 1916.

Swalin, Benjamin Franklin. The Violin Concerto, a study in German Romanticism. Chapel Hill, 1941.

Taylor, Philip Meadows. A Memoir of the Family of Taylor of Norwich. Privately Printed, 1886.

Temperly, Nicholas. Instrumental Music in England. unpub. Ph. diss. 1959, Cambridge University.

Thayer, Alexander Wheelock. The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven, (revised by H.E, Krehbiel). London, 1960.

Vidal, Louis Antoine. Les Instruments à Archet. Paris, 1876-78

Veinus, Abraham. The Concerto. London, 1948

Weber, William. Music and the Middle Class. New York, 1975.

Werner, Eric. Mendelssohn, A New Image of the Composer & his Age, (trans. Dika Newlin). London, 1963.

Whistling,Carl Friedrick; & Hofmeister, Friedrick. Handbuch der musikalischen Litteratur. Leipzig, 1817-1827.

Williams, C. àBecket. 'Spohr and his Influence', The Musical Times, lxiii(1922).

Wylde, Henry. Music and its Art-Mysteries. London: L. Booth, 1867.