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*Music & Letters*, Vol. 68, No. 3. (Jul., 1987), pp. 222-234.

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*Music & Letters* is currently published by Oxford University Press.

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# THE VIENNESE KEYBOARD TRIO IN THE 1780s: SOCIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEMPORARY RECEPTION

BY KATALIN KOMLÓS

THE DECADE of the reign of the Emperor Joseph II, its controversies notwithstanding, was a progressive and dynamic period in the history of the Habsburg monarchy. The introduction of political reforms prompted by the ideals of the Enlightenment, the rise of the general level of education, and the broader exchange of philosophical and literary ideas with other European countries created a more democratic intellectual climate; the growth of industrial enterprise and production stimulated economic development. During this period, too, the majority of the urban population in Austria enjoyed a greatly improved standard of living. As a result, the middle classes gained new status in both size and significance: a reasonably well-to-do bourgeoisie became an active participant in the social as well as cultural life of the imperial city of Vienna.<sup>1</sup>

The 1780s likewise saw major changes in Viennese music life through the establishment of local music printing and publishing. Compared to other European centres such as London, Paris and Amsterdam this was a relatively late start, but the ramifications of it soon affected all aspects of musical life. The firm that was to become the most important, Artaria, was founded in 1778; Torricella followed in 1781; the existence of the composer–publisher was initiated by Hoffmeister and Kozeluch (the *Musikalisches Magazin*) in 1784. The reciprocal relationship among composers, publishers and consumers naturally shaped the general taste and awareness of all who had anything to do with music.<sup>2</sup>

Contemporary accounts tell us a great deal about the vigorous musical activities in Vienna in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Keyboard playing—accompanied and unaccompanied alike—became especially popular in both aristocratic and bourgeois circles. ‘Vienna is certainly the land of the clavier!’, wrote Mozart to his father shortly after he had taken up residence there. ‘As for pupils, I can have as many as I want . . .’<sup>3</sup> It is true that Mozart was trying hard to persuade his father of his favourable prospects as a free-lance artist in Vienna, but his statements were most probably justified. According to contemporary sources, the new keyboard instrument, the fortepiano, was promoted most effectively by the teaching of Leopold Kozeluch. ‘For the lady dilettantes it is Kozeluch who counts the most on the pianoforte’, states a Viennese journal in 1788 in a short report on

<sup>1</sup> See Ernst Wangermann, *The Austrian Achievement 1700–1800*, London, 1973, Chap. 3; also Alexander L. Ringer, ‘Mozart and the Josephian Era: Some Socio-Economic Notes on Musical Change’, *Current Musicology*, ix (1969), 158–65.

<sup>2</sup> On early Viennese music publishing, see Alexander Weinmann, ‘Zur Geschichte des Alt-Wiener Musikverlages’, *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, xii (1957), 474–81; also the relevant volumes in idem, ‘Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alt-Wiener Musikverlages’, 2nd ser., Vienna, 1950—.

<sup>3</sup> Letters of 2 June and 26 May 1781: *Letters of Mozart and his Family*, ed. & trans. Emily Anderson, 2nd edn., London, 1966, ii. 739, 736.

the latest favourite music.<sup>4</sup> A somewhat later source gives a long account of Kozeluch's merits and his role in the musical life of Vienna:<sup>5</sup>

The vogue of the fortepiano is due to him. The monotony and the muddled sound of the harpsichord could not accommodate the clarity, the delicacy, the light and shade he demanded in music; he therefore did not accept pupils who failed to show much sympathy for the fortepiano as well, and it seems that he has no small share in the reformation of taste in keyboard music.

This source also lists the names and activities of 210 Viennese musicians under the title 'Virtuosen und Dilettante'. According to the descriptions all these ladies and gentlemen—aristocrats and middle-class people, singers and instrumentalists, professionals and amateurs—were engaged in lively musical activities.

Chamber music especially was cultivated widely in the last quarter of the century, and composers as well as publishers tried to produce music that would appeal to amateurs and would not exceed their technical abilities. A review in 1786 of newly published keyboard sonatas by Vanhal (issued by Artaria as Op. 30) states:<sup>6</sup>

In fair judgement of musical compositions one must also keep in mind what kind of amateurs the piece is written for, and whether the composer should not have to adjust to their abilities and taste . . . The composer of the present sonatas surely wrote them for amateurs whose hands are not yet practised enough to master great difficulties but who nevertheless enjoy good, expressive melodies. And in this respect they are excellently composed.

As is well known, the standard designation of the keyboard trio at this time was still 'Sonata for Harpsichord or Fortepiano, with the Accompaniment of Violin and Violoncello'; in other words, it was essentially a keyboard genre with added string parts.<sup>7</sup> Such works were evidently written for a relatively wide circle of music lovers who enjoyed home music making. Sonatas, accompanied or unaccompanied, were not meant primarily for public performance, so chamber music basically fulfilled the function of *Gebrauchsmusik*.<sup>8</sup> The piano was favoured mainly by ladies. Leaving aside the works of Haydn and Mozart, two-thirds of the Viennese keyboard trios published in the 1780s bear a dedication, and nearly all are addressed to ladies.<sup>9</sup> There were dozens of good women pianists at the time in Vienna. Most of Mozart's pupils were ladies (quite a few of them from the aristocracy).<sup>10</sup> Haydn's admiration for the pianistic abilities of the Auenbrugger sisters is well known through his

<sup>4</sup> *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (1788), 230, quoted in Hermann Abert, *W. A. Mozart*, 8th edn., Leipzig, 1973–5, ii, 158.

<sup>5</sup> *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* (1796; facsimile, ed. Otto Biba, Munich & Salzburg, 1976), 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Magazin der Musik*, ii (1786), 924.

<sup>7</sup> On the early history of the genre, see Michelle Fillion, *The Accompanied Keyboard Divertimenti of Haydn and his Viennese Contemporaries, c. 1750–1780* (unpublished dissertation), Cornell University, 1982; the ensuing period is treated in Katalin Komlós, *The Viennese Keyboard Trio in the 1780s: Studies in Texture and Instrumentation* (unpublished dissertation), Cornell University, 1986.

<sup>8</sup> The social implications of the sonata are summarized in William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, 2nd edn., New York, 1972, Chaps. 3 & 5.

<sup>9</sup> In the Haydn–Mozart repertory only one Haydn set (H.XV: 6–8) has a dedication, to the Countess Marianne de Witzay.

<sup>10</sup> On Mozart's piano pupils, see Heinz Wolfgang Hamann, 'Mozarts Schülerkreis', *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1962–3), 115–39.

letters and his dedication of the keyboard sonatas H.XVI: 35–39 and 20;<sup>11</sup> the musicality of Marianne von Genzinger was honoured by the Sonata in E flat H.XVI:49. Kozeluch also taught mostly ladies; eight of them are mentioned in the *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag*.<sup>12</sup> All five dedicatees of his keyboard trios from this period were ladies of the Austrian nobility. The engraving on the title-page of the Artaria edition of Haydn's E flat keyboard trio H.XV:10 shows a group that must be typical of the time: the lady is at the keyboard, and two gentlemen play violin and cello respectively on either side of the wing-shaped fortepiano.<sup>13</sup>

When in 1788 Haydn offered Artaria the choice of three new string quartets or three new keyboard trios, Artaria chose the trios.<sup>14</sup> According to contemporary Viennese publishers' catalogues, in the 1780s in Vienna there was a great demand for accompanied keyboard music, especially trios. Between 1781 and 1790, 70 keyboard trios were published there by eight composers: Clementi, Haydn, Hoffmeister, Kozeluch, Mozart, Pleyel, Sterkel and Vanhal.<sup>15</sup> Fifty-one were first editions; the remainder were reprints of non-Viennese first editions, simultaneously with, or within a year of, the originals.<sup>16</sup> In addition, eleven keyboard-trio arrangements of other compositions appeared in the same decade, all of them by Pleyel and published by Artaria between 1788 and 1790 (see Table I). The number of published trios exceeds that of duo sonatas for keyboard and violin (52 original works and five arrangements); the list of keyboard quartets and quintets is considerably shorter (ten quartets, three quintets and three quartet arrangements) (see Tables II & III).

The year 1786 seems to have been a significant turning-point: from then on the publishers offered a large selection in all genres, as opposed to the very few editions of the first half of the decade. (One reason for this could be that the number of publishing firms in Vienna had increased in the meantime.) Except for seven works by Mozart, no recently composed keyboard and violin sonatas appeared before 1786—the two sets of six works published by Torricella in 1781 were taken over from much older Paris editions. The first works for keyboard and three accompanying instruments appeared in 1785, the first one for keyboard and four additional instruments in 1786.<sup>17</sup> For some reason 1788 was an exceptionally productive year: more sonatas for keyboard and violin and keyboard trios and

<sup>11</sup> See Haydn's letters to Artaria from 1780 in *The Collected Correspondence and London Notebooks of Joseph Haydn*, ed. H. C. Robbins Landon, London, 1959, pp. 25–26.

<sup>12</sup> Pp. 8, 31, 46, 52, 54, 60, 63, 65.

<sup>13</sup> See the reproduction in Walter Salmen, *Haus- und Kammermusik*, 'Musikgeschichte in Bildern', ed. Heinrich Bessler & Werner Bachmann, iv/3 (Leipzig, 1969), 133.

<sup>14</sup> See letters of 10 and 17 August 1788: *Collected Correspondence*, pp. 77 f.

<sup>15</sup> This information, together with the further data shown in Tables I–III, is taken from reprints of contemporary publishers' lists: see Weinmann, 'Beiträge', 2nd ser. According to the catalogues, four Viennese publishers issued keyboard chamber music during the period 1781–90: Artaria, Hoffmeister, Kozeluch and Huberty & Torricella. The volumes of Weinmann's series used for this study are: *Vollständiges Verlagsverzeichnis Artaria & Comp.*, Vienna, 1952; *Die Wiener Verlagswerke von Franz Anton Hoffmeister*, Vienna, 1964; *Kataloge Anton Huberty und Christoph Torricella*, Vienna, 1962; and *Verzeichnis der Verlagswerke des Musikalischen Magazins in Wien* (Kozeluch), Vienna, 1950.

<sup>16</sup> Sterkel's Op. 17 is a problematic case. Ronald R. Kidd lists the set as first published in Mainz: see *The New Grove*, xviii. 127. But according to the Schott catalogue only three works out of the set of six were published in Mainz, in May 1784; the other three did not appear there at all before 1797: see Hans-Christian Müller, *Bernhard Schott, Hofmusikstecher in Mainz: die Frühgeschichte seines Musikverlages bis 1797*, Mainz, 1977, p. 87. Op. 17 as a complete set was published by Artaria in 1784 or 1785: see Table I.

<sup>17</sup> Mozart's Quintet in E flat for piano and wind, K.452, written in 1784, was not published until 1799, by Gombart in Augsburg.

TABLE I

Keyboard trios published in Vienna, 1781-90

(a) Original compositions

Year	Composer	Number of works	Original opus no.	No. in modern thematic catalogue	Publisher	Plate no.
1781	Kozeluch	3	Op. 3	P.IX:1-3	Artaria*	12
	Kozeluch	3	Op. 6	P.IX:4-6	Artaria*	21
1782	Vanhal	3	Op. 29	—	Artaria*	30
1783	—	—	—	—	—	—
1784 or						
1785	Sterkel	6	Op. 17†	—	Artaria*	51
1785	—	—	—	—	—	—
1786	Haydn	3	Op. 40	H.XV:6-8	Artaria*	75
	Haydn	1	—	H.XV:10	Hoffmeister	33
	Hoffmeister	4	6 trios concertants (Nos. 1-4)	—	Hoffmeister*	62, 83, 89
	Kozeluch	3	Partie IV	P.IX:7-9	Kozeluch*	?
	Mozart	1	—	K.496	Hoffmeister*	56
1787	Hoffmeister	2	6 trios concertants (Nos. 5-6)	—	Hoffmeister*	102
	Kozeluch	3	Partie V	P.IX:10-12	Kozeluch*	?
1788	Clementi	3	Op. 22 (London edn. Op. 21)	Op. 21	Artaria	20
	Kozeluch	3	Partie VII	P.IX:13-15	Kozeluch*	?
	Mozart	1	Op. 14	K.498	Artaria*	188
	Mozart	3	Op. 15	K.502, 542, 548	Artaria*	204
	Pleyel	6	VI. sonates	B.431-6	Artaria	214, 218, 219, 223, 220,
1789	Clementi	3	Op. 23 (London edn. Op. 22)	Op. 22	Artaria	216, 225
	Haydn	3	Op. 57	H.XV:11-13	Artaria*	239
	Kozeluch	3	Partie VIII	P.IX:16-18	Kozeluch*	?
	Sterkel	3	Op. 30	—	Artaria*	254-6
1790	Haydn	1	Op. 61	H.XV:14	Artaria*	327
	Haydn	2	Opp. 63, 62	H.XV:16, 15	Artaria*	329, 330
	Pleyel	3	Livre III	B.437-9	Artaria	328
	Sterkel	3	Op. 32	—	Artaria*	307
	Mozart	1	Op. 16	K.564	Artaria*	321

\* First edition

† As a complete set published first by Artaria; the first three trios published by Schott in Mainz, 1784. See note 16.

(b) Keyboard trio arrangements from the works of Pleyel, published in Vienna by Artaria, 1788–90

Year	Plate no.	Original composition
1788	191	String quartet B.303
	192	String quartet B.338
	193	String quartet B.346
	211	String quartet movements B.334/i, 341/ii, 334/iii
	212	String quartet movements B.340/i, iii
1789	267	Symphonie concertante B.111
	268	String quartet B.335
	269	String quartet B.274
1790	322	3 string quartets B.385, 384, 386

TABLE II

Keyboard and violin sonatas published in Vienna, 1781–90

(a) Original compositions  
(Occasional and programmatic pieces, variations etc. are omitted)

Year	Composer	Number of works	Publisher	Plate no.
1781	Mozart	6 (K.376, 296, 377–80)	Artaria	22
	Eichner	6 (originally Paris, 1770–71)	Torricella	7
	Boccherini	6 (originally Paris, 1769)	Torricella*	1
1782	—	—	—	—
1783	—	—	—	—
1784	Mozart	1 (K.454)	Artaria	147
1785	—	—	—	—
1786	Hoffmeister	2 (Duetti concertanti Nos. 1–2)	Hoffmeister	35, 47
	Mozart	1 (K.481)	Hoffmeister	28
	Sarti	3 (Op. 3)	Artaria	95
	Sterkel	1 (in D)	Hoffmeister	53
	Maddalena Syrmen	1	Artaria	94
	Hoffmeister	4 (Duetti concertanti Nos. 3–6)	Hoffmeister	114, 133, 141
	Mozart	1 (K.526)	Hoffmeister	128
1788	Anton Teyber	1 (in C)	Hoffmeister	105
	Boccherini	6 (see 1781 Torricella*)	Artaria	179
	Franz Grill	5 (Duos concertants Nos. 1–5)	Hoffmeister	160, 163, 192, 196
	Hüllmandel	1 (Op. 10)	Artaria	199
	Sarti	3 (Op. 4)	Artaria	215
	Grill	1 (Duos concertants No. 6)	Hoffmeister	204
1789	Pleyel	2 (B.571–2)	Artaria	227, 241
	Pleyel	1 (B.573)	Artaria	306

\*The only set published by two different Viennese firms in the same decade

(b) Keyboard and violin sonata arrangements from the works of Pleyel, published in Vienna, 1788–90

Year	Publisher	Plate no.	Original composition
1788	Artaria	171	String quartet B.331
1789	Hoffmeister	205	2 string quartets B.283–4
1790	Artaria	299	2 string quartets? B.334–5?
	Artaria	300	

TABLE III

Keyboard quartets and quintets published in Vienna, 1781–90

(a) Original compositions

Year	Composer	Ensemble	Publisher	Plate no.
1781–4	—	—	—	—
1785	Albrechtsberger	Quartet for clavier, 2 violins and bass	Hoffmeister	21
	Mozart	Quartet for clavier, violin, viola and bass (K.478)	Hoffmeister	22
1786	Hoffmeister	Quintet for clavier, violin, 2 violas and cello	Hoffmeister	65
	Vanhal	Divertimento for clavier (4 hands), flute, violin and cello ad lib.	Hoffmeister	42
1787	Mozart	Quartet for clavier, violin, viola and cello (K.493)	Artaria	111
1788	Hoffmeister	6 quartets for clavier, violin, viola and cello	Hoffmeister	158, 167, 176, 179
1789	Johann Mederitsch-Gallus	2 quintets for clavier, flute, violin, viola and cello	Hoffmeister	201
1790	—	—	—	—

(b) Keyboard quartet arrangements

Pleyel: 3 quartets for clavier, violin, viola and bass (Artaria, 1788); plate nos. 191–3

quartets were published then in Vienna than in any other year during the 1780s.

The numerical statistics of publication in the string chamber genres without keyboard (string quartet, string trio, string quintet) show similar tendencies. Table IV lists the number of such compositions published in Vienna in the same years.<sup>18</sup> These genres confirm a general rise in production in the middle of the decade. The exceptionally large output in 1788 and the drastic decline in the following year are even more prominent here than in the accompanied chamber genres. The sudden change seems to have resulted from general economic conditions in Austria. Joseph

<sup>18</sup> The sources of information are as in note 15, above.

II declared war on Turkey in 1788, and military expenses were overwhelming in the following period.<sup>19</sup> The defeats in foreign wars, the uprisings in the Netherlands and in Hungary, and finally the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 had a disastrous effect on the last two years of Joseph's reign.<sup>20</sup>

TABLE IV

String chamber works published in Vienna, 1781–90: original compositions

Year	Quartets	Trios	Quintets
1781	18	—	—
1782	18	—	—
1783	6	—	—
1784	12	6	3
1785	36	1	—
1786	29	10	5
1787	41	5	9
1788	49	17	12
1789	15	6	7
1790	15	—	1
Totals	239	45	37

The vogue of the keyboard trio in the last quarter of the eighteenth century is beyond doubt. Most of our repertory was published within approximately ten years, following the Viennese first editions, by fifteen London, six Paris, four German and two Amsterdam publishers. Another sign of popularity is the number of published arrangements made from keyboard trios: the works of Mozart and Pleyel lead in this respect. Pleyel's set of six trios B.431–6 was arranged for no fewer than nine different ensembles, his next set, B.437–9, for eight. Of Mozart's trios the individually published G major K.496 was the one most often arranged: this too appeared in nine different versions, among which a clarinet quartet and an orchestration (of the second movement only) were the most unusual.

The eight composers of the trio repertory embrace not only those who lived in Vienna (Hoffmeister, Kozeluch, Mozart, Vanhal) but others who had connections with Vienna and whose style therefore reflected the contemporary Viennese idiom. From the latter category, Haydn, who lived on the border of Austria and Hungary, obviously belongs to the Viennese circle; Pleyel, a native Austrian and pupil of Haydn, spent the first 25 years of his life within the boundaries of the Habsburg monarchy; Clementi, who made his home in England, travelled extensively on the Continent as a keyboard virtuoso and spent much time in Vienna; and Sterkel, although a native of south Germany, spent over two years in Italy, and his music reflects the Viennese style more than that of his native country.

<sup>19</sup> See Ferdinand Tremel, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, Vienna, 1969, p. 307; also Gustav Otruba, 'Wirtschaft und Wirtschaftspolitik im Zeitalter des aufgeklärten Absolutismus', *Wirtschaftsgeschichte Österreichs*, ed. Institut für Österreichkunde, Vienna, 1971, p. 121.

<sup>20</sup> See S. K. Padover, *The Revolutionary Emperor: Joseph the Second*, New York, 1933, pp. 358–90.

The contemporary reception of the trios of the 1780s, as with the music of any period, reflects public expectations and opinions. Reviews, reports, comments, letters, even announcements, tell us as much about the general taste of the period as about the works themselves.<sup>21</sup> In the late eighteenth century, when the claims of the consumers of music were regarded as important by composers and publishers alike, composers were ready to respond to popular demand.<sup>22</sup> As we have seen, the chief function of the accompanied sonata was to provide pleasant, technically not too difficult music for the amateur. Our composers naturally sought to satisfy this demand: they wanted to sell their music, and in this they succeeded, as contemporary reviews show. The critic of Cramer's *Magazin der Musik* writes in 1783 of the first set of Kozeluch's keyboard trios, P.IX:1–3, and his Op. 1 set of keyboard sonatas:<sup>23</sup>

Herr Kozeluch is an excellent composer. In his sonatas there is much invention, good melody and a style of progression all his own. The fast movements are very brilliant and naïve, the slow ones very tuneful. Therefore we can certainly recommend them to amateurs of the clavier. The third collection has violin and violoncello accompaniment and belongs with the outstandingly good sonatas of this kind.

The Op. 30 keyboard trios of Sterkel are the subject of the following review, published in the *Musikalische Real-Zeitung* in 1789:<sup>24</sup>

No excess of modulations to remote keys, no awkward difficulties or neck-breaking passages; but pleasant, flowing melody, well-ordered progress and—what is so rarely achieved by many of today's fashionable composers—tonal unity characterize these sonatas of Herr Sterkel.

The general demand for unpretentiousness in music in amateur circles went to extremes, as a comment in 1786 in the Salzburg–Viennese magazine *Pfeffer und Salz* shows: 'His [Kozeluch's] compositions bespeak an excellent mind, and no other fault is to be found with them than that they are too difficult'.<sup>25</sup>

This, however, is only one side of the coin. Certain critics of the time did object to shallowness and repetitiousness in contemporary music, however popular. The review of the P.IX:13–15 keyboard trios and Op. 20 keyboard sonatas of Kozeluch in the *Musikalische Real-Zeitung* in 1789 speaks from a different angle, that of the connoisseur:<sup>26</sup>

The composer's keyboard compositions are too well known for the musical public within and outside Germany to require further public recommendation here, and they are too much praised for the reviewer to venture a personal opinion against the general judgement . . . Only it seems to us that the composer sacrifices too much to the fashionable taste of our time: instead of creating ideals in his own great soul and presenting them with manly power, his pieces are, if one may say so, mere copies from

<sup>21</sup> For a recent discussion of this topic, see *Musik gedeutet und gewertet: Dokumente zur Rezeptionsgeschichte von Musik*, ed. Werner Klüppelholz & Hermann J. Busch, Kassel &c., 1983.

<sup>22</sup> See Jens Peter Larsen, 'Some Observations on the Development and Characteristics of Vienna Classical Instrumental Music', *Studia musicologica*, ix (1967), 131.

<sup>23</sup> *Magazin der Musik*, i (1783–4), 71

<sup>24</sup> *Musikalische Real-Zeitung für das Jahr 1789*, No. 45, p. 336.

<sup>25</sup> *Pfeffer und Salz* (5 April 1786), quoted from Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: a Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom et al., London, 1965, p. 270.

<sup>26</sup> Op. cit., No. 38, pp. 296–7.

common life dressed up prettily, like a maiden who seeks to please with flowers and ribbons. Therefore a comparison between the works of Herr Kozeluch and Bach [presumably C. P. E.] could never be made, and the latter, in spite of their less full sound, will always have a superior value for the connoisseur. Bach is always original, always new: Herr Kozeluch, on the other hand, has certain favourite ideas or passages which are to be found in nearly every one of his compositions, often with only very small modifications. To prove this, we wish to single out one of these [passages] from the works in front of us. If we took the trouble to consult his earlier works for this, we could confirm our judgement even more strongly.

Not only German magazines, but occasionally Viennese sources as well, disparaged the fashionable style of the time. The account of Kozeluch in the *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* (1796), for instance, includes not only praise and favourable comment (quoted earlier) but somewhat apologetic criticism as well:<sup>27</sup>

. . . His sonatas, those for solo fortepiano as well as those accompanied by violin and violoncello, are numerous and universally liked. One could only object that sometimes he pleases himself too much and so repeats himself too much and often stays too long in one place. Perhaps it is less just to say that he copies himself than to admit that when one finds similar passages in various pieces it is rather the mark of [his] style, and which Classical composer should we not recognize from his style?

Similar thoughts are expressed about the music of Pleyel by a more distinguished author, Charles Burney:<sup>28</sup>

. . . there has lately been a rage for the music of Pleyel, which has diminished the attention of amateurs and the public to all other violin music. But whether this ingenious and engaging composer does not draw faster from the fountain of his invention than it will long bear, and whether his imitations of Haydn and too constant use of semitones, and coquetry in *ralentandos* and *pauses* will not be soon construed into affectation, I know not; but it has already been remarked by critical observers, that his fancy, though at first so fertile, is not so inexhaustible, but that he frequently repeats himself, and does not sufficiently disdain the mixture of common passages with his own elegant ideas.

And yet a comment in the *Morning Herald* in 1791 about Pleyel's approaching London visit places him before Haydn in popularity, and it expresses again the priority of the unsophisticated manner in music:<sup>29</sup>

Pleyel, the celebrated composer, certainly visits this country in the course of the approaching musical season. This composer, who is a pupil of the great Haydn, is becoming even more popular than his master; as his works are characterized less by the intricacies of science than the charm of simplicity and feeling.

Some years earlier, a correspondent in the *Magazin der Musik* emphasizes the same qualities in Pleyel's music in a glowing report about his successful tour of Italy:<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst*, pp. 34–35.

<sup>28</sup> *A General History of Music*, ed. Frank Mercer, London, 1935 (reprinted New York, 1957), ii. 951–2.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, iii (London, 1976), 108.

<sup>30</sup> *Magazin der Musik*, ii. 1378.

. . . He has composed various beautiful keyboard sonatas which are in great demand here. The pleasant melody of these is not as heavy as in those of Clementi and Mozart; besides, he remains true to nature without neglecting the rules of strict composition.

Eighteenth-century music reviewers and correspondents clearly comprised both *Kenner* and *Liebhaber*; hence these differences of opinion and expectation. One thing is certain, however: musical society preferred, and even requested, fairly easy solo and accompanied keyboard music.

Certain critics commented on peculiarities of style such as the unusually important solo role of the strings in the trios of Sterkel and Vanhal.<sup>31</sup> A contemporary review of Vanhal's Op. 29 trios states:<sup>32</sup>

There is much fire and good melody in these sonatas, as in all of the composer's works. The violin is not idle in its accompaniment. Only it is a pity that the keyboard part is loaded with so much harp-bass!

Burney, writing about Sterkel's music, drew particular attention to the importance and effectiveness of the violin parts:<sup>33</sup>

The Abbé Sterkel has not travelled through Italy unprofitably; his harpsichord pieces, though not very learned or consonant to harmonic rules, are full of spirit, taste, and pleasing passages . . . His violin accompaniments generally consist of passages of effect, and such as give importance to the player. Indeed, his pieces, though not very original, are less tinctured with Bachism, or Haydnism, than those of his countrymen who have not visited Italy. And though less solid and less his own property, than Kozeluch's, yet they are more easy to execute, and more intelligible to unlearned hearers.

Sterkel was a well-known keyboard player, although some contemporary opinions on his playing were anything but complimentary. An outspoken correspondent wrote from Naples to the *Magazin der Musik* in October 1782:<sup>34</sup>

. . . The keyboard player *Herr* Abbé Sterkel, known otherwise through his mediocre sonatas, came here a year ago. His sonatas gained favour; he was asked to write an opera, and he was bold enough to bring his products to the stage. Besides, he had the audacity to reject Bach's excellent *Clavierschule* and to disparage his compositions, despite the fact that he is in no position to play the easiest Bach sonata properly. But he is perhaps the only German in his profession who plays the impostor. This role otherwise is more characteristic of the Italians and the French.

Mozart heard Sterkel play in Mannheim and sent his observations—sharp and frank, as usual—to his father on 26 November 1777:<sup>35</sup>

For a few days *Herr* Sterkel has been here from Würzburg. The day before yesterday, the 24th, Cannabich and I lunched again with Herr von Hagen, Chief Master of the Hunt, and I spent the evening at Cannabich's *al solito*. Sterkel came in. He played five duets, but so fast that it was hard to follow them, and not at all clearly, and not in time. Everyone said the same. Mlle Cannabich played the sixth and, to tell the truth, better than Sterkel.

<sup>31</sup> The keyboard-trio style of Clementi, Hoffmeister, Kozeluch, Pleyel, Sterkel and Vanhal is discussed in Komlós, *The Viennese Keyboard Trio*, Part II.

<sup>32</sup> *Magazin der Musik*, i. 927.

<sup>33</sup> Op. cit., ii. 960.

<sup>34</sup> *Magazin der Musik*, i. 574–5.

<sup>35</sup> *Letters of Mozart and his Family*, i. 391.

Other sources described his playing as ‘effeminate’ and his sonatas ‘suitable only for ladies’ diversion’.<sup>36</sup>

Concerning the contemporary reception of the trios of the two great masters, Haydn and Mozart, there are more documents in connection with Haydn. The Viennese first edition of the keyboard trios H.XV:11–13 (Artaria, 1789) received reviews from two German magazines; both judge them from the angle of the amateur. According to the *Musikalische Real-Zeitung*,<sup>37</sup>

Neither the principal part, nor the accompanying parts, are encumbered with difficulties such as would require especially trained players for these sonatas. The violin part only once, in the Andante of the last sonata, exceeds *c*′′, and even these seemingly difficult passages lie very well under the hand for untrained players.

The musical difficulties of the trios are perhaps somewhat underrated in this review; the critic of the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* at least suggests that this set might be more challenging than sight-reading material to some players:<sup>38</sup>

It is more the frequent modulations to remote keys—where many accidentals, often double sharps and flats, occur—than any innately difficult passages or those requiring great technical ability, which require a trained keyboard player for these sonatas. But if one cannot immediately play them at sight, one will be very richly rewarded for the effort. For if played nicely in all the parts and performed with the proper expression, they provide the greatest enjoyment that this kind of music can produce.

Haydn himself expresses special consideration for amateurs in his letter of 10 December 1785 to Artaria concerning the poor engraving of his latest trios, H.XV:6–8: ‘Even a professional would have to study before disentangling this passage, and then where would the dilettante be?’<sup>39</sup>

Another example of Haydn’s desire to appeal to his public is connected with the composition of the last trio of the set H.XV:11–13. A letter from him concerning the work also demonstrates the important relationship between composer and publisher at the time. He wrote to Artaria on 29 March 1789: ‘I send you herewith the 3rd Sonata, which I have re-written with variations, to suit your taste’.<sup>40</sup> Whether Artaria wanted more variety (perhaps the first movement was originally in sonata form, like those of the other two works in the set) or something easier and more melodious is difficult to say; the request may even have been prompted by a particular liking for Haydn’s variation movements. It is worth mentioning here that most of Haydn’s later, London keyboard trios were no longer written for amateurs. The late trios, especially the ones dedicated to the professional pianist Therese Jansen, assume a grandeur and brilliance that reflect Haydn’s direct

<sup>36</sup> Cited in *The New Grove*, xviii. 127.

<sup>37</sup> *Musikalische Real-Zeitung*, No. 36, pp. 280–81, quoted in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, ii (London, 1978), 723–4.

<sup>38</sup> *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, cxvii/1 (1790), 71, quoted from *ibid.*, ii. 723 (with the translation of the end of the first sentence corrected).

<sup>39</sup> *Collected Correspondence*, p. 51.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

acquaintance with London professional concert life. These trios differ in the same way from their predecessors as do the last keyboard sonatas from the pre-London ones.

Mozart, as is well known, seldom composed for publishers. What motivated him to compose keyboard trios, and what were the circumstances and occasions of performances of them (if any)? The little evidence we have is to be found in the composer's letters. These brief references indicate that the trios were written for informal musical gatherings. The name of the Jacquin family appears more than once in this connection: Joseph Franz von Jacquin, a botanist, and his children, the musical amateur Gottfried and the gifted pianist Franziska, Mozart's distinguished pupil, belonged to the composer's more intimate friends at the time.<sup>41</sup> On the very day when Mozart introduced his earlier G major keyboard trio, K.496, into his catalogue (8 July 1786), he wrote in a letter to Joseph von Jacquin: 'I ask you to send me by the person who delivers this the quartet in G minor; the sonata in E flat and the new trio in G'.<sup>42</sup> It is possible that the brand new trio, along with two other chamber works, had already been rehearsed and played at the Jacquins' house. I believe, following the reminiscences of Caroline Pichler, that Mozart composed his E flat trio for piano, clarinet and viola, K.498, for Franziska von Jacquin;<sup>43</sup> Abert assumes that the viola part was played by Mozart himself.<sup>44</sup> The postscript of a letter to Michael Puchberg (17 June 1788) apparently refers to the E major trio, K.542: 'PS.—When are we to have a little musical party at your house again? I have composed a new trio!'<sup>45</sup> The social nature of *Hausmusik* speaks for itself in a document such as this.

It was presumably a fairly select circle of *Liebhaber* at best, however, who chose to play Mozart's chamber music, so much more complex and demanding than the average Viennese repertory. No contemporary review of the keyboard trios is known today,<sup>46</sup> but the critic of the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, discussing one of the newly published keyboard quartets of Mozart, may well have been expressing a general opinion:<sup>47</sup>

A few words now on an odd phenomenon occasioned by him (or by his fame). Some time ago a single *Quadro* by him (for pianoforte, 1 violin, 1 viola and violoncello) was engraved and published, which is very cunningly set and in performance needs the utmost precision in all the four parts, but even when well played, or so it seems, is able and intended to delight only connoisseurs of music in a *musica di camera* . . . Many another piece keeps some countenance even when indifferently performed; but this product of Mozart's can in truth hardly bear listening to when it falls into mediocre amateurish hands and is negligently played . . . What a difference when this much-advertised work of art is performed with the highest degree of accuracy by four

<sup>41</sup> See Abert, *Mozart*, ii. 49–52.

<sup>42</sup> Translated from *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer & Deutsch, Kassel &c., 1963, No. 966, p. 554.

<sup>43</sup> Caroline Pichler, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus meinem Leben*, Vienna, 1844, i. 180; Abert refers to this information: see *op. cit.*, i. 826.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 313. In the preface to the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe*, VIII: 22/2, the ensemble is completed with the name of Anton Stadler: see p. xi. Likely as this seems, we again have no documentation for it.

<sup>45</sup> *Letters of Mozart and his Family*, ii. 916.

<sup>46</sup> A review of the early *Divertimento* in B flat, K.254, appeared in the *Magazin der Musik*, i. 118.

<sup>47</sup> 'Über die neueste Favorit-Musik in grossen Concerten, sonderlich in Rücksicht auf Damen-Gunst, in Clavier-Liebhaberey', *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (1788), 230–31, quoted from Deutsch, *Mozart: a Documentary Biography*, p. 318. This review, and excerpts regarding the two Mozart keyboard quartets from the writings of Nissen, Forkel, Jahn, Abert, Einstein and Schoenberg, are evaluated and interpreted in *Musik gedeutet und gewertet* (see n. 21, above), 36–38.

skilled musicians who have studied it carefully, in a quiet room where the suspension of every note cannot escape the listening ear, and in the presence of only two or three attentive persons!

The unusual musical and technical complexity of the keyboard quartets is suggested by the fact that the publisher, Hoffmeister, according to Nissen's account, withdrew his contract for additional compositions in the genre because he doubted their saleability.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> See Georg Nikolaus von Nissen, *Biographie W. A. Mozart's*, Leipzig, 1828, p. 633.