EDITORIAL NOTES

For the third episode of **Phase 2** of the **Dotzauer Project,** focused on his chamber music works, the choice fell on what is possibly his most mature, complex, and deeply expressive piece. It is also his last chamber work, bearing Opus number 180, published in 1851, and the largest one of them all. Its instrumentation is most ambitious, and perhaps one of the best clues we have at understanding why such an epic piece could be so easily forgotten. It is, in fact, a massive, 32-minute-long Trio for piano, violin, and cello, in four movements, dedicated to the composer's elder son, the pianist virtuoso Justus Friedrich Bernhard **Dotzauer.**

Against the giants

To be fair to history, composing a piano trio in 1851 and hoping it would remain popular was a hard bet by any composer. The seven trios by Ludwig van **Beethoven** (1770–1827) and the four by Franz **Schubert** (1797–1828) were already widely played, while two more giants had just joined the playground: Felix **Mendelssohn-Bartholdy** (1809–47), with two trios: Op. 49 in 1839 and Op. 66 in 1845, and Robert **Schumann** (1810–56), with three: Op. 63 in 1847, Op. 80 in 1850, and Op. 110 in 1851. Immediately afterwards, whatever glimpse of hope might have remained would have been blown out of the water by the three masterpieces penned by Johannes **Brahms** (1833–97): Op. 8 in 1853; Op. 87 in 1882; and Op. 101 in 1886. However good a piece Dotzauer's *Trio* might have been, his name alone meant there was no chance it could have survived the test of time.

To this, we may add a few additional points of reflection. All the great, immortal composers listed above were already known in life as full-time composers: they wrote symphonies, large scale works, and—besides—none of them had a full-time job as principal in an orchestra. At the same time, if we browse the newspapers of the time, we learn that the only major composition by Dotzauer that received an important review without being a pedagogical work for cello was his *Große Sinfonie in d-moll.*[1] Against all expectations, this piece received a four-page-long enthusiastic review, and it is a true pity that its material appears to be lost to us.

Dotzauer was a constant presence in the local press between 1806 and 1879—that's nineteen years after his death—either with a review of one of his public concerts or of one of his publications. The abundant advertisements from publishing houses, moreover, contained hundreds of entries of his music.

Therefore, while Dotzauer was an absolute star in life, it is clear that he never aimed at being popular as a composer. Rather, that was an activity that almost every musician undertook, some with greater success than others. He was a successful cellist, both in chamber music, in orchestral life, and in solo performance, possibly one of the best of his generation. Beyond that, he was a genius of pedagogy, and his greatest achievements remain, to this day, his four cello schools.

With 183 catalogued works, twenty more without *opus* number, and at least fifty that were just rejected by publishers and therefore lost, though, the care he put into the creation of new music just cannot be ignored. Could the average quality of his music be the cause of his fall from grace? As one of the handful of people in the last half century to have dedicated a considerable amount of time to this composer, I have to abstain from any positive judgment, as it would inevitably be biased.

A blind listening test administered to several cellists and composers returned quite positive reactions:

> *Second rate but charming ... post-Beethoven era, I would say a pianist or a string player with considerable piano skills. —*
>
> *The trio is well written, and it seems enjoyable to play — well-balanced between the three instruments. It has Schubert-esque elements but also other details in the form and repetition of material. —*
>
> *Beautiful piece! Even [digitally] it sounds pretty good. With real players it would make much more sense! —*
>
> *I think it's an excellent piece. It may have suffered because of how 'out of style' it likely was in the middle XIX century ... but really a good piece. Better than nearly all Beethoven's contemporaries. —*
>
> *It is a very "professional" work. It just lacks a little inspiration (even if the ideas are superb at the base) and melodic flights of fancy. For 1850, it's quite innovative, especially the Scherzo. I would have located that 25 years later. —*

In the end, history will tell if giving this piece a second chance was a sound idea.

1 *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung,* No. 40 (1838). Article N° 20 from May 16th.

Hunting for the source

Dotzauer's *Trio in E moll für Pianoforte, Violine und Violoncello,* Op. 180 was first documented in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik,* Issue 35, from 1851 where, on page 96, we find the following announcement:

> *Bei W. Damköhler in Berlin erschien mit Eigenthumsrecht : Trio pour Piano, Violon et Violoncelle (dédié à Just. Frederic. Bernard. Dotzauer) par J. J. F. Dotzauer. Op. 180. Preis 2 1/2 Thlr.*

This is an advertisement from the publisher Wilhelm **Damköhler,** who ran a "Verlagshandlung" (publishing house) in Berlin from October 1849 to July 1859, with distribution and delivery performed by *Siegel & Stoll* in Leipzig. Following the founder's death on February 14, 1859, his business was sold to Edmund **Stoll** in Leipzig[2]. The notice explains how the publisher, in Berlin, presented, with right of ownership, this Trio for Piano, Violin, and Cello by J. J. F. Dotzauer, dedicated to his son Justus Frederich Bernhard, listed as Opus 180, and sold for two and a half Prussian thalers[3]. Sadly, this first edition appears not to be publicly available. Furthermore, no mention of performances is recorded in music-focused German news outlets.

The next time we read of this piece is in a couple of advertisements in Issue 70 (1874) of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik,* and in the 1874 & 1875 issues of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. The advertisement—looking the same in all instances—is titled *Werke für Kammermusik* (Chamber Music Works) and subtitled with the full name of the publisher, *"F. E. C. Leuckart (Constantin Sander) in Leipzig".* The story of this publishing house is fascinating[4], and it is, in some form, still running today under a different name and property.

It is interesting to see how Leuckart decided to publish this piece in 1874, twenty-one years after its original publication. Even further, the cover mentions how the work was distributed in France by Jacques **Maho** (later acquired by Jacques **Hamelle,** Alphonse **Ledus,** and, eventually, *Wise Music Group*). The piece may, after all, have recovered some popularity and even gotten a few performances.

The copy used to create this edition is stored at the *New York City Public Library*[5], to whose personnel go my heartfelt thanks for making the material available for this research. It is made up of three elements, a full score (41 pp.) and two parts (7, 7 pp.), printed on 226 × 340 mm cream-coloured paper. It bears plate number FECL 2585 on all of them, even if the outer cover shows a faintly printed FECL 2071.

Several inconsistencies have been found between score and parts, and they are all listed in the *Critical Notes* at the end of the present volume.

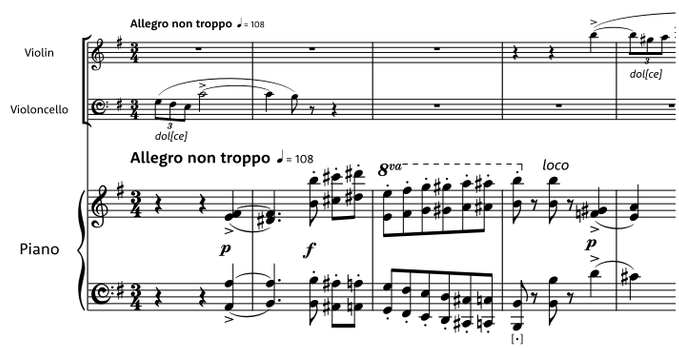
The Trio in E minor for Piano, Violin, and Cello — Op. 180

This Trio is a massive piece, lasting at least 32 minutes, and requiring impressive skills, especially from the piano player. Let's not forget that the dedicatee of this work, Dotzauer's eldest son Justus Friedrich Bernhard (Leipzig 1808 — Hamburg 1874), was a virtuoso pianist and professor of chamber music. The composer, therefore, was sure he could trust the skills of the pianist. The string parts are not easy by any mean, but they are a far cry from the piano one, confirming how comfortable and passioned Dotzauer was with the keyboard.

The piece is built upon the standard four-movement stamp used by Piano Trios (and Symphonies): a first movement in Sonata form (*Allegro non troppo*), a second, slower, movement in Lied form (*Andante cantabile*), a third, lighter, *Scherzo* and *Trio* (*Allegro non tanto*), and a closing fast movement (*Allegro*) again in Sonata form but using a fugue as main ingredient.

I. Allegro non troppo

The piece starts with a solo statement from the cello, in $\frac{3}{4}$ metre, the piano joining immediately afterwards with a run in contrary motion octaves:



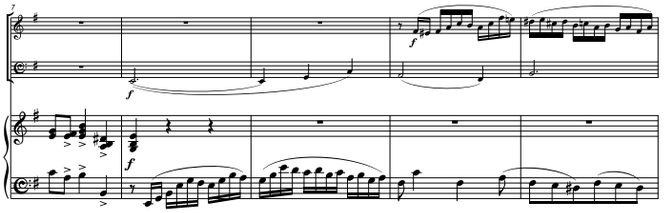
2 Thank you to Bernd **Krause** of Büro für Geschichtswissenschaften for finding this information.

3 Based on the document "Purchasing power equivalents of historical amounts in German currencies" accessible here, the score and parts set of this piece was sold at the equivalent of about EUR 100 today (2024). Link for physical copy: https://www.bundesbank.de/resource/blob/622372/d64726452d1eb2f62ce667f6784f89bb/mL/kaufkraftaequivalente-historischer-betraege-in-deutschen-waehrungen-data.pdf

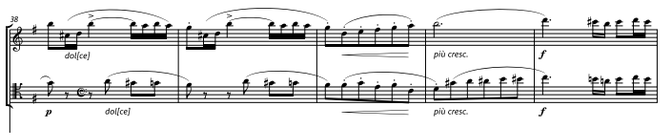
4 Read more here: https://imslp.org/wiki/F.E.C._Leuckart

5 Original link: https://www.nypl.org/research/research-catalog/bib/b22809906

The violin promptly reacts, soon revealing how this was just an introduction to the real exposition of the main theme:

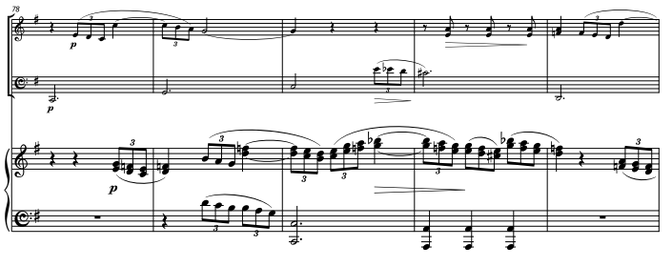


These three ideas get mixed, matched, and transformed in a two-periods-long modulating bridge, bringing us from the initial E minor to its relative, G major. This time, it is up to the violin to push the discourse forward:



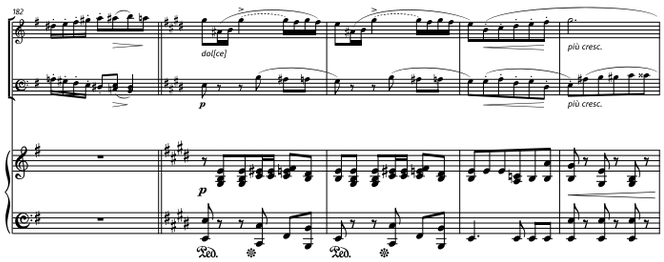
The two strings swap roles in the next period, reinforcing the theme in the listener's memory. A calmer, almost mystical coda section concludes the Exposition, with a final dominant seventh chord over B bringing us back to the beginning for the repeat. I believe this has to be played to avoid missing the origin of the material of the upcoming development, which is the starting triplet of the very first phrase.

With a surprise tonal shift, Dotzauer veers from the dominant of E minor to the key of C major, a typical Romantic modulation (VII/III solving on I).



As outlined in the excerpt above, all instruments are dancing around the opening triplets. From C major, we touch D minor (with a B natural from the descending Bach minor scale), E major, and finally F-sharp minor, this key persisting for longer, able to resist the lures of both B and C-sharp minor. The repeated triplet chords of the modulating bridge in the piano make a comeback while the strings chase each other as if they were in the *stretti* section of a fugue. This longer period contains brief modulations to B and E minor as a springboard to the A major of the next section, the first one to develop the melodic material of the main theme instead of the introductory triplets. The different ideas start to mix in a powerful, swirling concoction, first in A major, then in F-sharp minor once again, with the piano's rolling arpeggios in contrary motion contrasting the strings' melodic lines. The third instance of this new section explores D major and B minor, with lowered sixths obscuring the stormy waters we are sailing through. The time for smooth transitions is over, and we are now jumping from one key to another every two bars without any preparation. G, C, F-sharp (with a ninth chord!), and B major, sharply bring us back to E minor for the recapitulation.

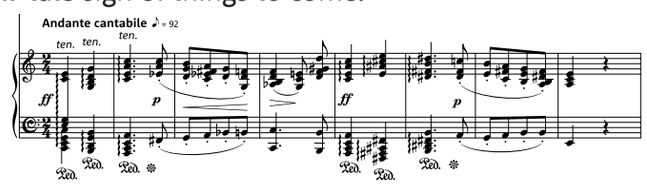
The main theme returns unaltered while the modulating bridge—which should keep us in the home key—cannot help but yearn for something more luminous, resulting in the second theme changing course for the E major sea.



The Coda, very similar to the one in the exposition, could easily end the movement, but Dotzauer is not the same composer of the *Two String Quartets,* Op. 12 from forty years earlier, where he would throw away the conclusion, condemning the pieces to oblivion. This time, he has learned the lesson, and a *più mosso* section based on the opening triplets gives the movement the finishing touch it was missing. The closing melodic movement of both piano and violin paints an ascending major third, E | F-sharp | G-sharp, warning the listener that this is not over, and that our journey together has just begun.

II. Andante cantabile.

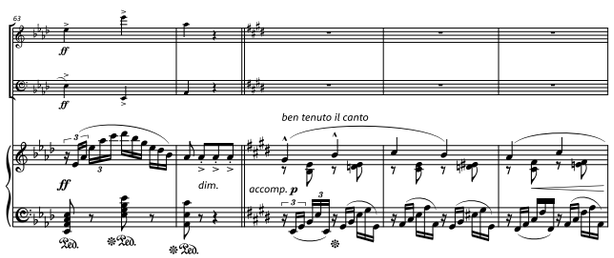
The second movement is based around the key of C major (submediant of the main key), and starts with a solo exposition of the main theme—made up of an upward arpeggio followed by a melodic descent—in the piano. The V–IV cadence at the end of the phrase is a tell-tale sign of things to come.



The initial response of the strings is, sadly, quite banal, and fails to convey interest to a potentially engaging harmonic start. The piano continues its progression, veering towards A major (b. 17), D, G, and back to C major, the strings still refusing to engage, as if observing from afar.

The final C serves as a common tone for **Part B,** in A-flat major, where the strings now take the arpeggio and syncopated lines, the piano replying with nonchalance, giving a sense of three actors cautiously studying each other on stage. The texture slowly grows in intensity, as if the three had found some common ground to build their future upon—this being announced by a brief excursion into F major.

The A-flat that concludes this section, repeated as bell chimes by the right hand of the piano, becomes the major third (G-sharp) of **Part C**'s key, where a whole new world opens.

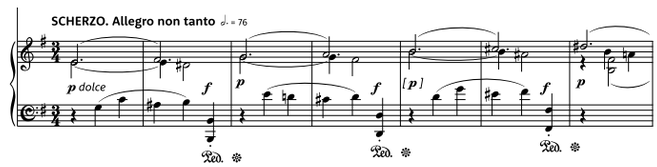


After an initial exposition of this new theme by the piano alone, the strings join in unison repeating the same line, accompanied by rebound chords in triplets (the F dynamic suggested in the piano should be carefully managed to avoid covering the strings). Another solo phrase in the piano part develops the new theme, promptly answered by the strings in the following period, still in parallel motion. The wait, though, is over, as the strings engage in an imitation duel where the cello follows the violin one bar later and a major seventh below, bringing also this part to a close with a soft E major chord in all instruments.

With no transition, we are brought back to C major with **Part D** (bb. 117-47), an ornamented version of **Part A** with a longer period that serves as a bridge to the closing section (**E**). The piano and the violin dance contrapuntally over delicate four-string arpeggios played by the cello, the first half of the period on a static C major pedal, and the second half on a descending fifth progression (A > D > G > C > F) pivoting on the final note to create a IV–V–I Perfect Cadence. The following period attempts a more variegated journey, starting from C major and visiting D-flat, E-flat, F, and G major in an ascending motion that lands on the most peaceful C major plateau. From there, we observe the calm after the storm, the gentle sun setting over the horizon, ready to sail towards new, uncharted seas.

III. Scherzo (Allegro non tanto) — Trio.

The opening phrase of the *Scherzo,* with the solo piano playing a contrapuntal realisation of the ascending E minor melodic scale, betrays early the imitative nature of this movement:



The strings join in the second period, alternating pizzicato and arco in perfect imitation. The cello then proposes a new melodic idea (in C major), immediately echoed by the violin and, successively, by the piano. A furious last period and a descending chromatic scale bring us back to the beginning with the canonical repeat.

The E that would have signalled the Tonic of the home key now represents the third of the Diminished Seventh chord of D minor with which the second part begins. The ascending scale is, this time, scattered between the instruments: E-F (natural) in the piano, G-A in the cello, C-D in the violin, and D-E in the piano once more. Now, though, we have moved from D minor to C major through a series of modulations by thirds: F minor, A minor, C major.

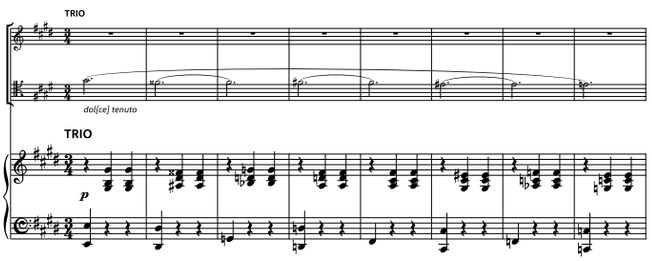
We cannot stop here, though: the C major deceptively peaceful chord gives way to another Diminished Seventh of B minor, which serves as a reprise of the previous melodic idea in the major mode. This is not a development, ready to go elsewhere, though, since the violent, diminished chords are back, this time pushing us towards a C-sharp minor which is not allowed to survive even one bar, immediately assuming the role of F-sharp's Dominant. This triggers a domino effect that avalanches downhill through B, E, A, and D major, this last one becoming the Subdominant of a Perfect Cadence to A major.

A new progression ensues, driven forward by the melodic idea previously proposed by the cello and based on a peculiar harmonic progression: I – V – iii – V/V, ending on the minor Tonic of the key based on the Dominant.

Thus, from A major, we jump to E, B, F-sharp, and finally to C-sharp minor. An extended pedal on the Dominant of E minor (B) allows the tension to ease enough to prepare the listener for the recapitulation of the initial theme.

The final two periods of the *Scherzo* are furiously trying to reach the home key, with G major and A minor trying to delay the inevitable as much as possible.

The *Trio,* based in the key of E major, is, surprisingly, in waltz form, and employs the mechanism of the "infinite screw" to fuel its harmonic structure. Already in the first period, where the cello plays a descending chromatic melody and the piano accompanies, we move through four keys: E major, G minor, F-sharp minor, and F minor.



The second period introduces a short melodic idea, performed in imitation between the strings, with the violin then taking the lead with broken chords lines. Here we have three micro-sections: the first modulating every bar (B-E-A-D), the second and third firmly settled in C-sharp minor. The final Tonic is followed by the Dominant of E major, bringing us back to the beginning through the repeat. We had not seen any melodic triplet since the first movement, and yet here they are, in the piano's arpeggiated chords, serving as a connection throughout the piece. The second ending of **Part A,** while using the same bass note (B), modulates from C-sharp minor to A major, where the cello proposes a new descending chromatic line, the piano takes the violin's broken chords over, and the violin replies to the cello with an ascending line.

In **Part B,** the cello's chromatic line lasts only four bars before passing to the other string in another key. To the A major offered by the cello, the violin reacts with B major, always with an ambitious chord progression: I – V – V/IV – IV | modulation | augmented 6th resolving on the new Tonic. To the C-sharp major offered by the cello, the violin replies with D-sharp major; the last chord, though, is a Dominant of C-sharp which, through a Deceptive Cadence, brings us back to A major. This has a peculiar effect, as though we had circled in a loop all this time, covering a considerable distance without apparently going anywhere.

The next period, dominated by the only truly melodic line of the movement, serves as a bridge towards a sort of recapitulation, this time apparently in B major. The stability is not to last, though, and while the violin and cello ride chromatic waves, the piano profits from almost improvising on them, covering the following keys in Tonic-Dominant chunks: B and B-flat major, then A, G-sharp, and G minor, the Dominant of which, a D major chord, is followed by a Dominant of C-sharp major!

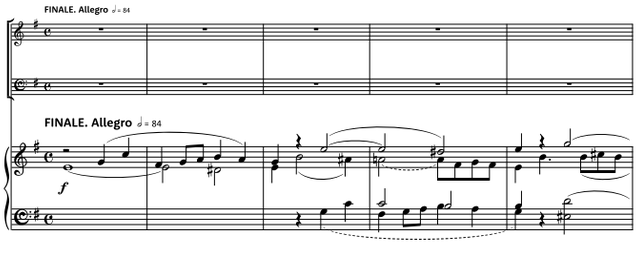
The melodic broken chords come back, now in the cello for the first time, with the violin answering in melodic octaves and the piano offering a steady rhythmical structure. From C-sharp, we descend to B major, A and F-sharp minor, and, suddenly, back to E major: home was just around the corner, after all. The conclusion—leading to the repeat of the second part—is, and surprisingly after all these fireworks, quite soft and calm, the first ending adding contrary motion to the piano triplets as it goes back to A major. The second ending, instead, is made up of three bars of E major Tonic, followed by a "General-Pause" bar. The *Scherzo,* without repeats, can now be brought back on stage.

IV. Finale. Allegro

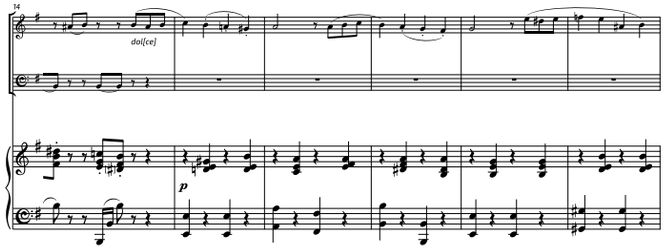
The last movement is what Dotzauer has reserved his best cards for: it is an *Allegro* in common time with a fast metronome mark that specifies the rate of a minim instead of that of a crotchet. I do not think it is a mistake, though, as the rhythms employed are often short enough to justify Dotzauer's choice.

The opening period that precedes the exposition of the main theme of this Sonata form is a fugue, where its elements are already closely intertwined from the very beginning.

IV

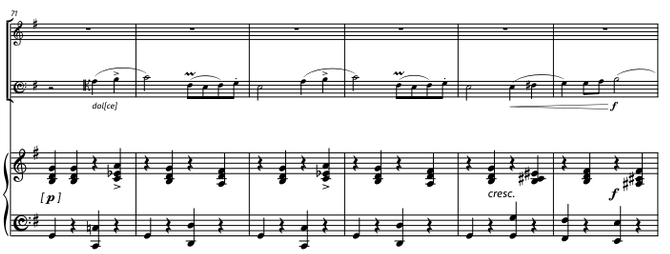


The violin and the cello join the fray, playing hide-and-seek with the material offered from the piano until it is time for the violin to take the lead.



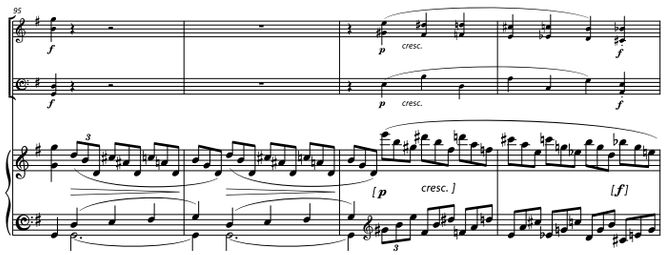
It is a playful melody of elementary form and structure, accompanied by the steady chords of the piano. This first phrase is then immediately repeated by the piano, with the cello closely chasing in imitation. The violin is again trusted with the task of building a bridge towards the second theme, opting for a V-IV-V cadence already in the first bar of the transition. With powerful scales in octaves and contrary motion, the piano accepts the challenge and paints its version of this scene, with the cello singing a proud and contrasting bass line alongside. Then, the piano alone adds two bars of chords to create a suspended cadence and a fermata that halts everything. What will happen now? Something new? A repeat? Neither of them, as what follows is a re-exposition of the initial fugal theme in the strings alone. The second phrase, though, deviates towards G major, where the piano joins for the final period of this bridge. Here we get the last return of the fugue, this time harmonically enriched by the strings' lines. The G major key is confirmed and reinforced by several excursions into neighbouring keys: E-flat major (lowered VI), Diminished Seventh of the Dominant, followed by a continuous alternation between the Dominant (D) and a resolution in minor mode. A last chordal progression in the piano's right hand (vi – V – vii°/V – V – I – V/V – V) introduces the second theme, while the left hand plays a Dominant pedal (D).

The chant of the secondary theme, in G major, is entrusted to the cello, with only the piano accompanying through chords alternating between the two hands.



The whole phrase ends with a perfect cadence in B minor, but the violin doesn't buy it, and insists in repeating the unaltered first part of the theme. The cello immediately engages in a contrapuntal battle, and the violin is obliged to change course to stay in G major. The piano is given its chance to express its perspective on this theme, proposing several modulating ideas while eventually coming back home with an ascending and descending scale in octaves where the triplet element tentatively peeps round the door.

The next section is based exactly on those triplets: is it a third theme, or just the coda of the exposition? Whatever the case, it is one of the more harmonically intense moments of the entire piece, where even the "infinite screw" found in the *Trio* of the third movement managed to find its way here.

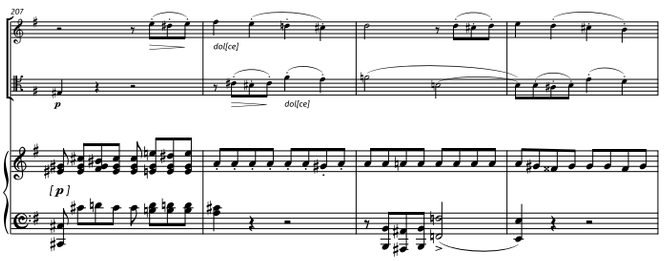


This whole period is repeated twice, with the strings engaging in complex chordal polyphony and the piano experimenting with different triplet configurations within the same harmonic path, eventually leading us towards E major. Contrary motion arpeggios in triplets in the piano, accompanied by ever more serrated syncopated chords in the strings, and followed by a chromatic descent, open the way towards the Development section, which begins with the main theme in the new major key. The melody is sung by the violin, but the cello immediately answers half-a-bar later with a stricter counterpoint, closely followed by the piano. The three instruments dance and swirl with and around each other, proposing, answering, falling back, pushing forward, until the theme of the bridge suddenly erupts in E minor.

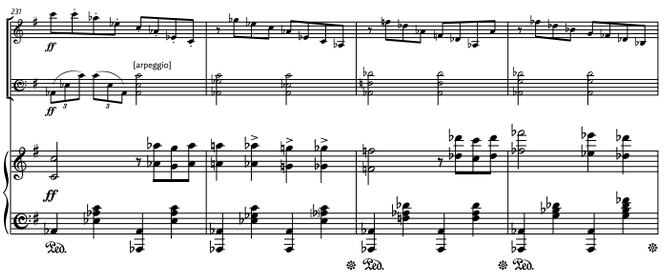
At first, the violin engages with the cello in a high-register duel, then the cello rejects its previous partner for the piano, relegating the fiddle to a low-register accompaniment that almost sounds as a clear provocation. The violin, though, doesn't appear to be willing to play along: this period, in fact, is cut short to seven bars, with a fermata at the end, and on a suspended cadence. What comes next is at best unexpected because it is a third reprise of the introductory fugue, this time in C major, by the violin and cello alone. The initial period is followed closely by the piano, summarising with two hands what had just been proposed by the strings.

The fugal dance then continues in A minor, first in the piano, then in the strings, with a final deceptive cadence (E-F natural) introducing the final period of this development, in a short three-voice invention in the piano alone that twists the mode into major.

The Recapitulation kicks in with the main theme in A major, a striking contrast in character from its first appearance at the beginning of the movement (in E minor). This section will contain four periods based on the same idea, each time with a different accompaniment style or contrapuntal structure. The first period is entrusted to the singing voice of the cello accompanied by broken chords in the piano rich in secondary and tertiary dominants, and apparently ending in C-sharp major. The violin now takes the lead with the melody still in A major, the cello replying contrapuntally half-a-bar later, and the piano imitating the theme's upbeat with the left hand while playing repeated single notes in the right one.



The second half of the period veers towards new tonal shores, pivoting through the Dominant of F major to somehow get to B minor, the third period's key. The piano plays the main theme with the right hand and enriches it with fast arpeggios in triplets; the violin and cello can only punctuate this density with short bits of the melody's beginning portion. The deceptive cadence at the end of the first phrase allows the modulation to G major, and the same structure will thrice repeat with modulations to E minor and C major. The final deceptive cadence is what modern business language would define "the composer's exit strategy", with this new twelve-bar bridge now based in A-flat major.



The whole ensemble plays FF, the violin in descending arpeggios, the cello in arpeggiated chords, the piano performing a guitar-like accompaniment in the left hand and a chromatic variation of the main theme in the treble. The violin picks up the A-flat from the piano and changes it enharmonically to G-sharp to slingshot the harmony into a C-sharp major/minor full-of-pathos and drama. I am not aware of what kind of hands did Bernhard **Dotzauer** have, but here is the only spot in the piece which appears to be (almost) unplayable (b 241): fast triplets in octaves jumping up and down in contrary motions in the two hands. A much simpler solution with a similar if not equivalent sound signature might be possible. A long fermata on an unison G-sharp, followed by a double barline, and a key signature change to E major, introduces us to the recapitulation of the secondary theme.

Compared to the Exposition, the violin goes first here, accompanied only by the piano, while the cello goes second, accompanied by the contrapuntal line of the violin, and with the piano playing alternated chords throughout. The same coda heard before makes a comeback in major mode, but the true surprise is the key signature change back to E minor that follows. For the next two pages (bb 276-91), the piano doesn't play anything else than triplets in either arpeggios or octaves. The violin and cello reply with syncopated chords and polyphonic double-stops in the first period and with dotted rhythms in the second.

The main theme makes a final try to come back on stage but is pushed away by the return of the opening fugue, this time orchestrated over the three instruments. This lasts only four bars, though, and the piano's triplets, coupled with the strings' chords, give a gloomy end to this monumental piece. The closing cadence is peculiar, with a Dominant of the Subdominant, a major Subdominant, and a minor one to give a Plagal cadence conclusion to E minor. May Dotzauer have forgotten Johann Sebastian **Bach**'s lesson that no contrapuntal piece may end in minor? We may never know and, perhaps, it is better to leave this question an open-ended one.

About this edition

This edition is based on the only surviving source from *F. E. C. Leuckart (Constantin Sander),* plate number FECL 2585. No autograph has been found so far.

Several edits have been necessary: the few supposed wrong notes have been marked with their corrected equivalent in square brackets or with *ficta* accidentals outside the stave to mark a possible oversight.

Whenever articulation or slur structures were thought to have been omitted to save vertical space—or simply time and ink—they have been marked either in dashed typeface or with the addition of the word "sim." in square brackets. A few gradual dynamics were marked incoherently between the instruments, often due to the lack of vertical space—the full score being extremely packed. They have all been uniformed and a note has been left in the appendix.

The *Critical Notes* section includes the over two hundred remarks that have been found during the fifteen-months-long preparation of this edition. The final edition includes this volume and the two separated string parts.

I would like to thank all those who made this edition possible, from the personnel of the New York City Public Library to the composers and performers who have listened to this piece and shared their invaluable opinion during the construction phase. Finally, I would like to thank Swiss composer William **Blank** for his in-depth aural analysis of the piece and for sharing his enlightening view on Dotzauer's surprising and unexpected style.

I hope that this piece will be allowed to find its way back into concert halls and recording studios, where—in my humble opinion—it rightly belongs.

The Editor
Michele Galvagno
Belgrade, Serbia — September 8th, 2024