Anneke Scott

Jacques-François Gallay. Playing on the Edge

In February 1831 the great violinist Niccolò Paganini arrived in Paris. On his first evening he visited the Théâtre Italien, where he heard Gioachino Rossini's opera *Otello*. The following evening he attended a soirée at Rossini's publisher, Eugène-Théodore Troupenas, where both Rossini – already a friend of Paganini – and the great mezzo-soprano Maria Malibran were in attendance. Malibran had sung the role of Desdemona the night before and Paganini, already known for his *Sonata a Preghiera*[1] (variations on a theme from Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto*) proceeded to entertain the assembled company, performing a fantasia on one of Desdemona's arias.[2]

Paris had been a notable omission from Paganini's touring schedule. Ill health had dogged him over the previous decade and he had put off an appearance there until now. Parisian audiences were also renowned for their high level of discernment, especially concerning violinists. Louis Spohr had warned:

> "It is always a hazardous undertaking for a foreign violinist to make a public appearance in Paris, as the Parisians are possessed with the notion that they have the finest violinists in the world, and consider it almost in the light of arrogant presumption when a foreign[er] considers he has talent sufficient to challenge a comparison with them."[3]

The early 1830s, however, provided a perfect opportunity for Paganini. Friends such as Rossini were at the height of their influence and audiences were hungry for the virtuosic, improvisational performances for which Paganini was famous. Shortly before Paganini arrived in the city, the entrepreneur Louis-Désiré Véron had taken over the running of the Opéra. Véron had had difficulty booking artists and it was his good fortune that Paganini was looking for a venue. Paganini was booked for a series of ten concerts over two months at the Académie Royale de Musique. His reputation preceded him; publications of his works had travelled to Paris and local violinists questioned whether they

1 Unless otherwise stated, all translations into English are here by the present writer. – The *Sonata a Preghiera* is also known as the *Moses Fantasy* MS23 – Variations for the fourth string on the theme "Dal tuo stellato soglio" from the opera *Mosè in Egitto* by Gioachino Rossini.

2 Arnaldo Bonaventura: *Niccolò Paganini*, Genova ²1915, p. 71; Lillian Day: *Paganini of Genoa*, New York 1929, pp. 186–187; Edward Neill: *Paganini. Il Cavaliere Filarmonico*, Genoa ²2004, p. 337; Walter Rowlands: *Among the Great Masters of Music. Scenes in the Lives of Famous Musicians*, London 1906, pp. 174 f.

3 Louis Spohr: *Selbstbiographie*, Cassel/Göttingen 1860/61, cited after the anonymous English translation: *Louis Spohr's Autobiography*, London 1865, vol. 2, pp. 119 f.

were playable.[4] His first performance on 9 March 1831 boasted a full house and was attended by many of the leading artists of the time: "It would be impossible to describe the enthusiasm with which the public was seized hearing this extraordinary man; it was delirium, frenzy".[5]

Paganini planned ten concerts at the Opéra. There should have been another concert on 10 April 1831, but the venue and orchestra of the Opéra were double-booked, the officers of the National Guard having organised a ball for the benefit of the poor. Paganini was invited to attend and perform, but instead, controversially, he performed that night at the Théâtre Italien. This caused a backlash among some of the press, who painted Paganini as uncharitable; however, Paganini successfully rescued his reputation, partially by giving a benefit concert for charity on 17 April.

The timing of Paganini's arrival in Paris coincided with a series of engraved group portraits published by Bulla. These brought together various "leading lights" of their field, each portrait being engraved by Lemercier from an original by Jacques François Gauderique Llanta (1807–1864). The series comprised "Auteurs célèbres"[6] and "Médecins célèbres" both "français"[7] and "étrangers".[8] Few women appear in this series except for the prima ballerinas of the Paris Opéra in "Les Artistes Contemporaines".[9]

"Les Artistes Contemporains" celebrates the musical heroes of the day. In it we see the leading musicians of 1830s Paris surrounding the most fêted of them of that time, Niccolò Paganini. All these musicians had high profile solo careers and, in the case of the non-pianists bar Paganini, they held prestigious posts in one or other of the opera houses, normally in combination with posts for the Chapelle Royale or the newly formed Société des Concerts du Conservatoire. Again with the exception of Paganini, they were also

4 François-Joseph Fétis: *Notice biographique sur Nicolo Paganini, suivie de l'analyse de ses ouvrages et précédeée d'une esquisse de l'histoire du violon*, Paris 1851, cited after the English translation by Wellington Gurnsey: François-Joseph Fétis: *Biographical Notice of Nicolo Paganini with an Analysis of his Compositions and a Sketch of the History of the Violin*, London 1856, p. 79.

5 François-Joseph Fétis: Premier concert de Paganini, in: *Revue musicale* 5 (12 March 1831), No. 6, pp. 41–43, cited after the translation by Paul Metzner: *Crescendo of the Virtuoso. Spectacle, Skill, and Self-promotion in Paris*, Berkeley 1998 (Studies on the history of society and culture, vol. 30), p. 131.

6 D'Alembert (Jean-Baptiste le Rond), Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), Denis Diderot, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon, Claude-Adrien Helvétius, Montesquieu (Charles-Louis de Secondat) and Bernard de Fontenelle.

7 Antoine Dubois, Pierre-Eloi Fouquier, Jacques Lisfranc, François-Joseph-Victor Broussais, Charles-Chrétien-Henri Marc, Mathieu Joseph Bonaventura Orfila, Guillaume Dupuytren and François Magendie.

8 Carl August Wilhelm Berends, Karl Borromäus Graf Harrach, Johann Goercke, Christian Ludwig Mursinna, Ernst Ludwig Heim, Johann Ludwig Formey, Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland and Samuel Gottlieb von Vogel.

9 Marie Taglioni, Lise Noblet, Pauline Montessu, Amélie Legallois, Alexis Dupont and Constance Julia.

Illustration 1 **"Les Artistes Contemporains", lithograph by Jacques François Gauderique Llanta. © Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, S36_G03840**

notable teachers all with positions at the Conservatoire de Paris, which by this time had re-established itself after the political hiatus in the second decade of the nineteenth century. They all had been awarded or were to be awarded the Légion d'honneur. Working clockwise from the left of Paganini we have:

Jean-Louis Tulou Flautist (1786–1865). French, born in Paris. Enrolled at the Conservatoire de Paris aged 10. In 1799 (aged 13) he was awarded the second prix, missing out on the premier prix due to his young age, but was finally awarded the premier prix in 1801.

He had been a member of Napoleon's Chapelle-Musique until the Restoration and was eventually appointed to the reinstated Chapelle Royale. He was principal flute at the Théâtre Italien from 1804 to 1813, at the Opéra from 1815 to 1822 and again from 1826 till his retirement in 1856, and he was also the first principal flute of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire. He was professor of flute at the Conservatoire de Paris from 1829 to 1856, publishing his *Méthode de Flûte* in 1835, and was awarded the Légion d'honneur in 1860.

Friedrich Wilhelm Kalkbrenner Pianist (1785–1849). German, born en route from Kassel to Berlin. He studied piano and harmony at the Conservatoire de Paris from 1799 to 1801, winning premier prix in both subjects. On graduating from the Conservatoire he studied with both Joseph Haydn and Muzio Clementi. After a disappointing return to Paris he moved to London in 1814 where he spent a fruitful ten years. In 1824 he returned to Paris where he became hugely successful. A mark of his new-found fame was the Légion d'honneur, which he received in 1828. His *Méthode pour apprendre le piano-forte à l'aide du guide-mains* Op. 108 was published in 1831 and his *Traité d'harmonie du pianiste* Op. 185[10] in 1849.

Gustave Vogt Oboist (1781–1870). French, born in Strasbourg. Enrolled at the Conservatoire de Paris in 1798 and was awarded the premier prix the following year. He also studied composition and was probably a student of Antonin Reicha. He joined the Théâtre Italien in 1800 and then moved to the Opéra-Comique in 1802 (until 1812). A member of Napoleon's Chapelle-Musique and the Musique Particulière, like Tulou he was dismissed in 1815 only to be later reinstated in the Chapelle Royale. In 1809 he was promoted to principal oboe at the Opéra-Comique and appointed adjunct professor at the Conservatoire. He succeeded his old teacher, François-Alexandre Sallantin, as principal oboe at the Opéra (1812–1834) and then as professor at the Conservatoire (1816–1853), but his *Méthode* was unpublished during his lifetime. Vogt was a member of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire from its formation until 1842. In 1829 he was awarded the Légion d'honneur.

Frédéric Berr Clarinettist (1794–1838). German, born in Mannheim. Originally a bassoonist, coming to the clarinet later in life. He succeeded Vincenzo Gambaro as the principal clarinettist of the Théâtre Italien in 1823, where he worked until his untimely death in 1838. He also succeeded Lefèvre as professor of the Conservatoire de Paris in

10 The German version of this work, *Harmonielehre zunächst für Pianofortespieler*, has the alternative opus number 190.

1831. The following year he was appointed principal clarinet of the Musique du Roi and in 1835 was awarded the Légion d'honneur. His *Traité complet de la clarinette à 14 clefs* was published in 1836.

Henri Herz Pianist (1803–1888). Austrian, born in Vienna. Herz enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire in 1816 to study piano (Louis-Barthélemy Pradher), harmony and composition (Victor-Charles-Paul Dourlen) and counterpoint and fugue (Reicha). He was appointed professor at the Conservatoire de Paris 1842–1874 and was the author of *Méthode complète de piano* Op. 100. He was a founder member of the Cercle Musical (also known as the Société Musicale). Hugely successful in the 1830s and '40s, he also travelled extensively visiting much of Europe, Russia, South America and the USA. He was awarded the Croix d'officier de Légion d'honneur in 1863.

Pierre-Marie Baillot Violinist (1771–1842). French, born in Passy. Baillot was briefly a violinist with the Théâtre Feydeau, later moving to the position of leader at the Opéra (1822–1831) and the Chapelle Royale (1827 onwards, a member since 1825). Leader of the second violins of Napoleon's Musique Particulière. He also studied composition with Charles-Simon Catel, Reicha and Luigi Cherubini. He came to prominence in 1814 due to his participation in chamber music concerts which did much to establish the quartets and quintets of Luigi Boccherini and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and the quartets of Haydn and Ludwig van Beethoven as part of the repertoire. He taught at the Conservatoire de Paris from 1799, co-authored the *Méthode de violon* with Pierre Rode and Rodolphe Kreutzer and was the sole author of *L'art du violon* (1834). He was awarded the Légion d'honneur in 1824.

The final member of this eminent ensemble is the horn player Jacques-François Gallay, a musician who has frequently been described as the last of the great French hand horn players,[11] and who was born in Perpignan on 8 December 1795. His earliest musical training was with a local musician, Artus, with whom Gallay studied solfège at the age of ten. Two years later he began to learn the horn with his father, an amateur horn player; his early progress is thought to have been due more to the student's disposition than his teacher's talent.[12] Gallay first came to public attention when, at the age of fourteen, he stepped into the shoes of the indisposed principal horn of the local theatre orchestra.

11 "Gallay was the last major hand-horn figure"; Jeffrey L. Snedeker: Gallay, Jacques François, in: *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, London 2001, vol. 9, p. 443.

12 François-Joseph Fétis: Gallay (Jacques-François), in: *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*, Paris 1866, 2nd edition, vol. 3, p. 387.

Illustration 2 Jacques-François Gallay, lithograph by Nicolas-Eustache Maurin (1799–1850). © Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, s36_g04034

This was all the more remarkable as the work in question was François Devienne's *Les Visitandines*, which contains a demanding obligato horn solo in the aria "O toi, dont ma mémoire".

For a time. Perpignan offered Gallay sufficient musical opportunities both as a horn player and as a composer. He studied composition with the son of the bassoonist Étienne Ozi and performed works of his own including his Concerto for Horn. Eventually, encouraged by visiting musical dignitaries, Gallay made the decision to travel to Paris with a view to enrolling at the Conservatoire. François-Joseph Fétis explains Gallay's hesitancy to move to Paris as being due to "the attachment that the father had for his son".[13] An alternative explanation may be that he was conscripted into the army. A letter dated 15 June 1865, shortly after Gallay's death, contains information pertaining to the calculation of the pension that Gallay's widow was to receive.[14] The length of time he had been employed by the Conservatoire is given as 21 years, 11 months and 3 days, during

13 Ibid, p. 387.

14 This "lettre concernant Mme Gallay du Conservatoire Impérial de Musique au Ministre de la Maison de l'Empereur" in the Archives nationales de France (AJ 37/69,3) was kindly brought to my attention by Cyrille Grenot.

the period 1842–1864. It also lists his military service in the 6e Régiment d'artillerie à pied, which lasted 9 years, 9 months and 24 days, and which may have covered the period 1810–1820 when Gallay was fourteen to twenty-four years of age.

Another possible explanation of Gallay's hesitancy could be the turbulent time the Conservatoire was having. The Conservatoire had been founded on revolutionary principles. Its roots lay in Sarrette's 1792 Institut National de Musique which had been created to train the sons of serving members of the Garde Nationale into wind and brass players.[15] Therefore in 1815 it fell foul of the restored monarchy and was forced to shut temporarily. It reopened in a much reduced form in 1816 as the École Royale de Musique et de Déclamation, though its future was still in question.[16] It was only in 1822 when Luigi Cherubini was appointed its director that it began to regain the authority that it had enjoyed prior to the Restoration. It was during this period of unrest in 1820 that Gallay attempted to enrol; however, his Parisian career was almost thwarted at the very start. Despite being accepted as a student by Louis-François Dauprat, the horn professor of the Conservatoire, Gallay was 24 and thus technically too old to enrol. Dispensation was eventually granted, Gallay was accepted for both the horn and composition courses, and he gained the premier prix in 1821.

Upon graduation Gallay quickly established himself on the Parisian musical scene. He initially joined the orchestra of the Odéon, but this position was soon superseded by his appointment, in 1825, as solo horn of the Théâtre Italien, a position that would bring him into contact with a number of important musicians. This was not the only position Gallay was to hold – he was also a member of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire (from 1828), the Chapelle Royale (until the 1830 revolution) and the Musique Particulière (after 1832). He was also a founder-member of the Cercle Musical. At the end of 1842 he succeeded his teacher Dauprat as professor of horn at the Paris Conservatoire. This was a somewhat controversial move, as it forced Dauprat's retirement from the institution and led Dauprat to view Gallay as his supplanter, not as his successor.[17] Like his fellow "Artistes Contemporains" he was also awarded the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur on the 27 April 1845.

Gallay retired from the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire in 1843 due to ill health. From the 1850s onwards he was regularly incapacitated. His description of his symptoms

15 Jean Mongrédien: *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism 1789–1830*, Trans. Sylvain Fremausc, Oregon 1996, p. 234, p. 14.

16 Ibid, p. 27.

17 See letter from Louis-François Dauprat to M. Leroy, sub-librarian of the Conservatoire de Musique et de Déclamation (the Paris Conservatoire) dated February 1855, quoted in full by Cyrille Grenot: Le Dons de Dauprat au Conservatoire de Paris (Correspondance de 1852 à 1862), in: *La Revue du Corniste* (autumn 2000), No. 79, pp. 15–18.

suggests arthritis in his legs. This was to become so severe that he often had to ask the Conservatoire to let him teach from home.

Gallay's death on 8 October 1864 at the age of 68 was widely reported. The Spanish newspaper *La Gaceta musical barcelonesa* reported rumours that he would be succeeded by either Joseph-François Rousselot,[18] Mathieu-Gustave Baneux[19] or Jean-Baptiste-Victor Mohr.[20] Mohr was appointed. He was a former student of Gallay's and would continue to champion the natural horn for years to come. His appointment is particularly notable as he replaced not only Gallay but also the recently retired Pierre-Joseph-Emile Meifred, who had taught the valve horn at the Conservatoire since 1833. This illustrates the institution's continued emphasis on the natural horn rather than the valve horn. The year after Gallay's death, Fétis, defending the valve horn, suggested that Mohr and Baneux were only against it on grounds of its inferior tone quality, but that if they would bother to study it, they would find proof to disabuse them of this view.[21]

For much of Gallay's professional life he maintained a high profile as a soloist, appearing with ensembles such as the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire as well as at popular soirées. As a result there are a number of commentaries on his playing that go some way towards explaining the high regard in which he was held. The horn has always been regarded as a challenging instrument and Gallay's playing was admired for his control, accuracy, and beauty of sound. The critic Joseph d'Ortigue summed up the experience of listening to Gallay:

> "I am embarrassed to speak of M. Gallay, for I do not know how to express all that astonishes me about his performance on the horn. It is impossible to distinguish open notes from stopped notes; and then his sound is so pure, so full, his agility so great, his phrasing so sustained and so controlled, that this instrument, totally incomplete, totally unforgiving that it is, seems to be perfected by an enchantment."[22]

18 Joseph-François Rousselot, 1803–1880. Pupil of Dauprat, awarded the second prix in 1822 and the premier prix the following year. A member of the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire from its formation in 1828, of the Opéra 1839–1869 and the Chapelle Impériale from 1853.

19 Mathieu-Gustave Baneux, 1825–1878. Pupil of Dauprat, awarded the second prix in 1839 and the premier prix the following year. A member of the Opéra-Comique 1841–1847 and the Opéra from 1847 till his retirement.

20 Jean-Baptiste-Victor Mohr, 1823–1891. Pupil of Gallay, awarded the premier prix in 1847. Member of the Opéra 1853–1883, the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire 1854–1862.

21 François-Joseph Fétis: De la nécessité de substituer les nouveaux instruments d'Adolphe Sax aux anciens, dans les orchestres, in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* 32 (2 July 1865), No. 27, pp. 215 f.

22 Joseph d'Ortigue: Société des Concerts. Quatrième séance, in: *La Quotidienne* (16 April 1833), ed. in: *Joseph d'Ortigue. Ecrits sur la musique 1827–1846*, directed by Sylvia L'Écuyer, Paris 2003 (Publications de la Société française de musicologie, vol. 17), pp. 329–333, here p. 332 f.

Many commentators make particular mention of Gallay's treatment of stopped and open notes. His playing is often cited as the best example of accuracy, purity, elegance, taste and control. This anonymous review from 1828 is typical:

> "M. Galay [sic] is now in the first rank of horn virtuosos: what distinguishes this artist is his purity of sound and a manner of singing that leaves nothing to be desired, and which gives the idea of the greatest possible perfection. He should be particularly cited as a model for the equality he was able to give to the stopped sounds and the open sounds of his instrument, for it is known that that is the greatest difficulty of this instrument."[23]

In his *Méthode*, Gallay explains in detail his approach to horn playing. Crucially, given the reports of his playing just cited, he argues that perfection is not in the nature of the horn and that stopped notes should be enjoyed for the special effect they create.

> "The use of stopped sounds is one of the greatest means of expression that one can use on the horn. In the course of this method, I have taken it upon myself to indicate the manner of obtaining them with as much accuracy as possible, and have reserved a special article to speak about their effects. This nuance, this contrast, this opposition in any instance gives music an immense variety and adds to its inexplicable beauty and charm. One must accept here that it is not in the nature of the horn for it to be perfect, although it does have over other instruments a superiority of language belonging only to itself which no one will contest. [...] These experiments with stopped tones, of which I have not found any examples written with the same intention, either in former compositions nor those of today, have been submitted several times for the appreciation of the public, and I must say that the appreciation with which this musical novelty has been received and the sanction which has been willingly given to it have proved to me beyond doubt that this innovation has seemed fortunate and in good taste."[24]

Gallay cites his *Onzième solo pour le cor et piano* Op. 52 as an example of one of his "experiments". Early in the work he includes a version of the main theme crafted around the stopped notes of the instrument. He creates an extended passage (illustration 3, bars 54–63) using only stopped notes, which contrasts with the subsequent passage (bar 66 onwards) using only open notes. This clearly illustrates a desire to use the stopped notes as a musical effect, enjoying the difference in timbre, rather than trying to hide their existence and mitigate the difference between them and the open notes.

Like many of his fellow "Artistes Contemporains" and other musicians of the time, Gallay was a prolific composer. With over sixty works to his name, his output covers many genres – solos for horn and piano or orchestra, "mélodies" or fantasias on operatic themes, ensemble music for two, three or four horns and for horn, voice and piano, a

23 Anonymous reviewer in *Revue musicale* 3 (March 1828), No. 9, pp. 206 f., quoted in Amy McBeth: *Jacques-François Gallay. A study of his life and selected works for accompanied horn*, DMA thesis, University of Iowa 2005, p. 190.

24 Jacques-François Gallay: *Méthode pour le cor*, Op. 54, Paris [ca 1845], p. 91.

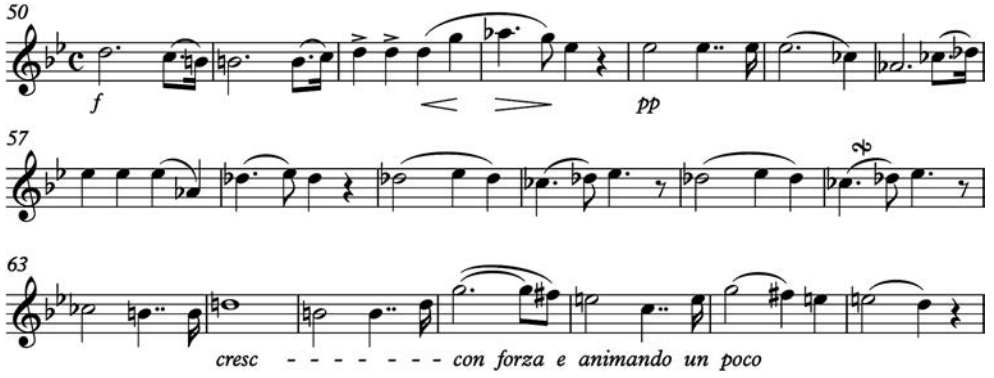

Illustration 3 Jacques-François Gallay: Onzième solo pour le cor et piano Op. 52

wealth of pedagogical works including the *Méthode* for horn of ca 1845, and a number of works for unaccompanied horn.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there had been an explosion in compositions for wind instruments. In many cases they mirrored developments in the instruments themselves. In 1793 Vandenbroeck complained that composers did not bother to study wind instruments, and that this meant they failed to understand the complexities of the instruments and therefore wrote badly for them.[25] For the growing number of wind virtuosi it was imperative that they created their own repertoire. The composer and theorist Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny pointed out the crux of the situation in 1808. "It is a pity for the wind instruments that the great composers do not play them, and those that do play are not normally great composers".[26]

Paris was abounded in concerts, providing many platforms for musicians to perform their works. The *Journal de l'Empire* summed up the situation:

> "The taste for music has increased extraordinarily, and the country has seen the number of its musicians multiply in proportion. Never has Paris resounded to so many concerts, and it is flattering to the artists that they have so many theatres at their disposal where they can present their talent to the public."[27]

The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, reviewing a concert that included a performance by Gallay, reported that "the concerts in Paris are numerous [...]. Due to the legion of virtuosos who stay there, you find many extra concerts which are very interesting."[28]

25 Othon-Joseph Vandenbroeck: *Traité général de tous les instruments à vent à l'usage des compositeurs*, Paris 1793, p. 8.

26 Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny: Concert, in: *Cours complet d'harmonie et de composition*, Paris 1803, vol. 2, pp. 674 f., quoted in Jean Mongrédien: *French Music*, p. 274.

27 *Journal de l'Empire* (20 March 1810), p. 4, quoted in Mongrédien: *French Music*, p. 234.

28 *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 41 (20 February 1839), No. 8, col. 154.

Concerts could spring up anywhere. Sometimes they would be just part of an evening's entertainment – a warm-up to a ball or dinner, or they could be much more formal, such as a series of concerts at the Opéra or Conservatoire.

During the eighteenth century France had a poor reputation for the standard of its orchestral musicians, often having to import them from other countries. However, there had been many organisations such as the Concerts des Amateurs, the Concert de la Loge Olympique, the Société Académique des Enfants d'Apollon and the famed Concert Spirituel that had done much to promote concert going. Many of these organisations fared badly after the revolution, in part because of their association with the fallen aristocracy. The scene recovered quickly, with many entrepreneurs seeking to exploit the changing political scene – many fortunes were made and lost in quick succession. The formation of the Conservatoire did much both to boost the standard of instrumental playing and to reintroduce regular concerts with its public exercises and its relationship with the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire.

Parisian opera houses were also active in giving public concerts in addition to their regular opera performances. The roots of these activities can be traced to the practice of closing opera houses during the Easter period and only allowing the more "serious" practice of instrumental or sacred music. In 1812, the high number of "Easter" concerts organised by the Théâtre Italien prompted the *Journal de Paris* to comment that "in the old days, these events did not last beyond the religious fortnight. Their chief purpose was to fill the void left by all other performances. Today, we are more musical than devout. Music is what we seek first of all, so maybe all is not lost."[29] As already mentioned, the concerts at the Opéra, the Opéra-Comique and the Théâtre Italien offered platforms to many visiting virtuosi such as Paganini.

Wind instruments were very popular, and the more varied and virtuosic the works performed, the better. In 1812 the critic Géoffroy attended a concert at the Théâtre Italien and commented that:

> "the fact is all too often forgotten that a concert is a festive occasion, and those who attend it seek to gratify their senses. … *Symphonies concertantes* featuring wind instruments are preferable to violin concertos, which invariably bore the audience. All concertos should be short, melodic, and varied. … Most listeners judge the beauty of music only by its brilliant ornamentation."[30]

In the early nineteenth century, public concert programmes were often designed to include many different genres – the symphony, the concerto and sinfonia concertante,

29 *Journal de Paris* (30 May 1812), quoted in Mongrédien: *French Music*, p. 234.

30 Géoffroy: Concerts spirituels, in: *Le Journal de l'Empire* (4 April 1812), p. 3 f., quoted in Mongrédien: *French Music*, p. 207.

chamber music, vaudeville and opera all featured, with movements often taken out of context, creating a hotch-potch of a programme:

> "A concert is a particular kind of show that offers no plot interest like a tragedy, a comedy or a tableau. [The richness of music] cannot be appreciated if it is not varied. A concert including only vocal numbers might just be tolerated if there is artful variety, but if only symphonies or concertos are heard, such uniformity would only create total boredom."[31]

The programmes of the Société des concerts du Conservatoire reflected such beliefs. Founded in 1828, the personnel of the orchestra drew upon professors and current and former students, and in its first year it boasted founder members Dauprat, Auguste Blangy, Jean-Baptiste Mengal and Meifred as its stellar horn section with Gallay joining later in the same year.[32]

Concerts by the Société would include a Beethoven Symphony, plus another symphony or a movement from a symphony (often Haydn or Mozart), scenes from operas (Carl Maria von Weber, Mozart and Christoph Willibald Gluck were popular), a solo concerto or fantasia or variations for a solo instrumentalist or duo and a choral work (again Mozart, Cherubini and Haydn were popular).

The programme for 7 February 1836, in which Gallay made a solo appearance, was typical:

> "2nd CONCERT
> Sunday 7 February 1836
> 1. Symphony in E flat by Haydn.
> 2. Hymn by Mozart, solos sung by Dérivis and Couderc.
> 3. Fantaisie for horn on themes from *La straniera* of Bellini, composed and performed by Gallay.
> 4. Mystères d'Isis scene,[33] sung by Dérivis.
> 5. Symphony [No. 4] in B flat by Beethoven."[34]

Hector Berlioz attended this performance and wrote both of his admiration of Gallay, echoing many of the traits identified by other commentators, and of his reservations concerning the fashion for works based on opera themes:

> "M. Gallay came next and we heard a pot-pourri on Bellini themes, for solo horn. The talent of this virtuoso has been known and appreciated for a long time; the opinion of artists and amateurs is unanimous on this subject. Excellent embouchure, surety of intonation, accuracy, a pure sound, good

31 Correspondance des professeurs et amateurs de musique, 15 January 1803, quoted in Mongrédien: *French Music*, pp. 206 f.

32 D. Kern Holoman: *The Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, 1828–1967*, Berkeley 2004, p. 61. François Lesure et al.: *La Musique à Paris en 1830–1831*, Paris 1983, p. 119, fn 11, suggest the section of five horns was so that the parts could be shared out, presumably to prevent fatigue.

33 Ludwig Wenzel Lachnith's arrangement of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.

34 Antoine Elwart: *Histoire de la Société des concerts du Conservatoire*, Paris 1860, p. 173.

> taste in the ornaments, he has all that constitutes a horn player of the first order. However, we would have been much more interested to hear him play a piece really composed for him, rather than this collection of cavatines, the principal fault of which is inevitable at this time. Chanteurs, opera singers, instrumentalists of all kinds live only on the themes of Bellini. In salons, at concerts great and small, in the very same streets [...] one hears only the duo from the *Puritans* [...] or the cavatine from *La Straniera*."[35]

At the same concert, Joseph d'Ortigue was more taken with Gallay's composition, describing how "a fantasy for horn on the various motifs of *La straniera* was performed with skill, charm and a style so pure, which distinguish the delicious talent of M. Gallay".[36]

The idea of a concert of chamber music was quite new. Chamber music would be played by both professionals and amateurs in private or might form part of a bigger concert. Pierre Baillot and his aforementioned chamber music series did much to arouse interest in the genre.[37] As audiences came to appreciate the string repertoire of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, wind chamber music also benefited from this appetite.

This growing interest led in 1834 to the creation of the Cercle Musical, whose founder members included Herz, Henri Brod and Gallay. The objective of this society was to present a wider selection of music than the Société des Concerts du Conservatoire with a greater emphasis on chamber music and the works of Mozart, Beethoven and Johann Nepomuk Hummel. The indication that they were also setting out to perform unpublished works by "the celebrated author of Guillaume Tell" hints at the great enthusiasm at that time for Rossini and Italian opera in general.

The concept of the solo recital was yet to be invented. Solo performers could be heard performing a solo concerto or similar work for solo instrument and orchestra, but were more frequently to be heard at private soirées organised by individuals. At these soirées, several soloists would appear, on their own and in whatever configurations the artists available could make possible. In her memoirs, Mademoiselle Avrillion describes such a soirée held by Empress Josephine at Malmaison:

> "Once a week, the empress would give a concert which featured the best artists in Paris: the talents wrestled with each other, each on their various instruments, Dupont with his bass, Naderman on his harp, Tulou with his flute, Duvernoy with his horn. Baillot made his violin speak its soul, and Paër accompanied the singers on the piano; there were quartets and quintets, followed by singing."[38]

35 Hector Berlioz: Second Concert du Conservatoire, in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* 3 (14 February 1836), No. 7, pp. 54 f., here p. 55.

36 Joseph d'Ortigue: Conservatoire – Second Concert, in: *Revue de Paris* 26, 2nd series (21 February 1836), p. 186–188, here p. 188.

37 Given between 1814 and 1840.

38 Marie-Jeanne Avrillion (with Charles-Maxime Catherinet de Villemarest): *Mémoires de Mademoiselle Avrillion, première femme de chambre de l'Impératrice, sur la vie privée de Joséphine, sa famille et sa cour*, Paris 1833, vol. 2, p. 312.

Soirées could be bought wholesale. Eminent musicians could be trusted to organise the minutiae of the event in a manner similar to today's breed of party organisers – the host would just need to pay one musician who would put his address book to good use and subcontract his virtuosic friends and colleagues:

> "The great maestro [Rossini] would sit at the piano all evening, accompanying the singers. He usually added a virtuoso instrument player, Herz or Moscheles, Lafont or Bériot, Naderman, the best harpist, Tulou, the King's first flutist, or the wonder of the musical world, little Liszt. They would all arrive together at the appointed time, by a side door, would all sit together round the piano, and then all leave together, after having received the compliments of the host and of various musical dilettantes. The next day Rossini would receive his salary and it was thought that that was enough, for them and for him."[39]

Publishing houses such as Pleyel, Sieber, Imbault and Troupenas, along with newspapers and specialist music publications also organised such events for their subscribers. Gallay performed with his former teacher in the first performance of his *Grand Quatuor* Op. 26 at a soirée held at the piano maker Dietz's on Saturday 19 January 1833. The programme was extensive:

> "First part:
> Grand Septet by Hummel, performed by Listz [sic], Brod, Conninx, Dauprat, Gelineck, Uhran [sic] and other artists.
> Morceau de chant.
> Violin Duo by the Eichhorn brothers.
> Morceau de chant.
> Piano solo performed by Listz [sic].
>
> Second part:
> Piano trio *Polyplectron et Aerephon* composed especially for this concert by Fétis and performed by the composer, Fessy and Urhan.
> Morceau de chant.
> Horn quartet [*Grand Quatuor*], composed by Gallay and performed for the first time in public by the composer, Dauprat, Mengal and Meifred.
> Morceau de chant.
> Violin solo by Eichhorn.
> Romances."[40]

Improvisation was a key element at such events, as in Paganini's aforementioned performance of a fantasia on a theme from *Otello*. A common feature of such soirées would be the improvisation of preludes or an extemporisation on popular themes. Adeptness at

39 Daniel Stern (pseud. of Marie Catherine Sophie de Flavigny, Countess d'Agoult): *Mes souvenirs, 1806–1833*, (3rd edition) Calmann Lévy, Paris 1880 p. 303, quoted in Mongrédien: *French Music*, p. 248.

40 *Revue musicale* 6 (12 January 1833), No. 50, p. 399; see also: Jeroen Billiet: *200 years of Belgian Horn School? A comprehensive study of the horn in Belgium, 1796–1960*, Tielt 2008, Annexe, no page number.

this practice was a badge of honour. Such feats of inspiration and virtuosity were greatly attractive to early nineteenth-century audiences and, among horn players, Gallay was the leading exponent of it.

This type of improvisation was so common at the time that commentators rarely mentioned it. For information about this practice it is helpful to look more broadly. The writings of other instrumentalists can prove useful, although as this was a skill associated with musicians at the top of their profession, methods and treatises mention the subject but sparingly. More intimate accounts such as diaries and letters also prove more informative than the press of the time.

Momigny defined a prelude as "An introduction, a musical discourse, preliminary and improvised or supposed to be, in which a composer makes known his musical knowledge and skill on the instrument on which he preludes". He warns that "it requires a genius as free as it is profound" and those without the knowledge and genius needed were risking too much.[41] Preluding had multiple benefits for the performer and the audience. The performer:

- had the opportunity to "warm up", to test the acoustic, to check how the instrument was responding,
- could signal to the assembled audience that his performance was commencing,
- could introduce the tonality or the character of the work he was about to perform or create a link between pieces he was performing, and
- was able to demonstrate his "creative" skills as a composer and an improviser.

Carl Czerny summed these points up when he wrote:

> "It is akin to a crown of distinction for a keyboardist, particularly in private circles at the performance of solo works, if he does not begin directly with the composition itself, but is capable by means of a suitable prelude of preparing the listeners, setting the mood, and also hereby ascertaining the qualities of the pianoforte, perhaps unfamiliar to him, in an appropriate fashion."[42]

The audience in return was encouraged to settle down and focus on the music. Liszt joked that the opening page of his Fantasy on Bellini's *La sonnambula* was included only to allow the audience "to assemble and blow their noses." When he got to the second page he said, "So, now everyone sits!"[43]

41 Momigny: *Cours complet*, vol. 2, p. 693.

42 Carl Czerny: *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte* Op. 200, Vienna 1829, p. 5, quoted in Kenneth Hamilton: *After the Golden Age. Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance*, Oxford 2007, p. 104.

43 *The Piano Master Classes of Franz Liszt, 1884–1886. Diary Notes by August Göllerich*, ed. by Wilhelm Jergen, trans. Richard Louis Zimdars, Bloomington 1996, p. 59, quoted in Hamilton: *After the Golden Age*, p. 112.

Preludes could vary enormously in length, depending on their particular role. Czerny summarised the main types of prelude:

1. Preludes and short fantasies – performed before the beginning of a piece.
   (i) the short prelude, not much more than a couple of chords.
   (ii) the longer, more elaborate prelude which incorporates themes of the following piece.
2. Preludes of a longer and more elaborate type.
   Can be used to form an introduction to a work where the composer has not included an introduction (e.g. rondo or variations that start with the theme). Can include unmeasured/recitativo passages, a great deal of expression and extreme modulations.[44]

The musicians illustrated in "Les Artistes Contemporains" were all particularly renowned for their prowess in improvisation; they also provide us with some of the most illuminating accounts of the art of preluding.

The violinist Pierre Baillot's Art du Violon of 1834 contains the following "General Rules", in effect echoing Czerny's categories.

> "As the *improvised prelude* is not generally destined to serve at all as preparation or introduction, it can be called a *fantasy prelude* or *improvisation*; it is free in its movement, in its forms, in its length; all praise to the man who, following the impulse of his genius, can exploit at the same time all the resources of the art in this kind of fancy which allows him to reach the sublime!
> But the improvised prelude which serves as a preparation or introduction cannot enjoy the same freedom. Let us add that it becomes harmful when it is unnecessary and that only a feeling for the proprieties can determine the need for it.
> Once this need has been established, 4 bars of melody will suffice, played gracefully or tossed off with a flourish, to prepare for or introduce a piece. Such will be the *melodic prelude*.
> A few chords struck resolutely will likewise suffice to determine the key and command silence; such should be the *harmonic prelude*.
> But silence is most often the only preparation that it is suitable to use; it should in all instances come after the prelude."[45]

Another of the "Artistes Contemporains", the pianist Kalkbrenner, set about demystifying the art of preluding in his 1849 *Traité d'harmonie du pianiste*. Having recognised the problems that many students had in mastering the art he had identified that:

> "There is a weakness in the way composition is taught, which means that the student, while learning the chords and their inversions, often does not know how to use them. It is this omission that we tried to address, by applying our examples, as far as possible, to the rules for figures. How many of our best pianists could produce even a mediocre prelude? And as for the pupils, one cannot find one in a thousand who, in his improvisations, tries to go beyond the perfect cadence. We therefore thought

44 Czerny: *Systematische Anleitung*, pp. 5–21.

45 Pierre Baillot: *L'Art du Violon. Nouvelle Méthode dédié à ses élèves*, Paris 1834, p. 184; English translation in Robin Stowell: *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, Cambridge 1985, p. 356.

> that the work which we offer today to conscientious amateurs would serve the art, by lifting a corner of this veil that hides the technical aspect of music and which makes it almost incomprehensible to all those which are not profoundly initiated into it."[46]

Of Gallay's compositions there are five works that are of particular importance for preluding by horn players and which offer a good cross-section of the different approaches to the art form:

- *Quarante préludes pour le cor mesurés et non mesurés* Op. 27
- *Douze grands caprices pour le cor, faisant suite aux études et préludes* Op. 32
- *20 mélodies gracieuses arrangées pour le cor* Op. 33
- *Récréations musicales sur des motifs italiens pour cor seul* (2 suites) Op. 44
- *Vingt-deux fantaisies mélodiques* (2 suites) Op. 58.

Quarante préludes pour le cor mesurés et non mesurés Op. 27 The Op. 27 *Préludes*, dedicated to Charles Courcier, are divided into two categories: the first twenty are written "mesurés", that is to say with a time signature and regular bars, whilst the second twenty are "non mesurés", in a much more fluid, irregular style. The *Préludes mesurés* are mostly a page long or shorter and each have an identifiable character or technical challenge. The *Préludes non mesurés* are slightly shorter. Few are even a page long. The style, being unlimited by the strictures imposed in the *Préludes mesurés*, is significantly more improvisational. These *Préludes non mesurés* incorporate much more widely contrasting materials and techniques. The *Préludes mesurés* would help horn players with specific technical skills necessary for preluding, and provide ideas about particular styles or characters of music which they may wish to incorporate whilst preluding; the *Préludes non mesurés* encourage greater flexibility and challenge the musician to juxtapose strikingly different types of material.

Not all of the leading horn players were enthusiastic about the fashion for preluding. Both Heinrich Domnich and Dauprat cautioned students against it; curiously, both of them felt preluding had a detrimental effect on students' stamina. Domnich wrote in 1808:

> "Also when one studies, one has to defend oneself against the sterile mania of preludes, and of that taste which inclines one to prefer playing detached phrases to coherent music. By permitting the player to rest at each instant, he is not being prepared for pieces of long duration. Such practice does not

46 Frédéric Kalkbrenner: *Traité d'harmonie du pianiste. Principes rationnels de la modulation, pour apprendre à préluder et à improviser. Exemples d'Etudes, de Fugues et de Préludes pour le Piano*, Op. 185, Paris 1849, p. 1.

> contribute to the strengthening of the lips nor does it accustom one to the control of respiration. For acquiring this habit the student ought to impose upon himself the rule of working often at his special studies with the same continuity as if he played them in public."[47]

In 1824 Dauprat echoed Domnich in his *Méthode de Cor Alto et Cor Basse*:

> "[…] Domnich rightly condemns the mania for 'preludes' and isolated phrases, which can never provide the endurance and the firmness of embouchure needed for long pieces. [He also criticises] the exaggerated zeal with which students, in prolonging their practising sessions beyond a reasonable length of time, hinder their ability to play again each day, and even [their ability] to increase the duration [of the sessions]; their potential increases gradually by habit of practice."[48]

Their issues with preluding seem to concern the delicate balance for a student between practising too little and therefore not improving in strength, and practising too much to a damaging extent. Domnich's and Dauprat's frustration stems, perhaps, from their students being more interested in experimenting with their own creations at the expense of progressing on the instrument.

In Gallay's 1842 *Méthode pour le cor* he outlines his thoughts on improving stamina, cautioning students against tackling overly ambitious repertoire too soon:

> "The student must only attempt music in proportion to his strength; consequently only embark on studying the lessons in this method in the order in which they are presented. It strikes one immediately that powerless and premature attempts to avoid difficulties, far from speeding one's progress, can, on the contrary, delay and sometimes even entirely stop it. […] For a future with the horn it is necessary to have, more than anything, a deep vocation […]. The student, especially in the beginning, will have to practise these exercises for a short length of time, and in frequently repeating anew these exercises the student will succeed in strengthening his lips, which would have weakened had the student forced the exercises."[49]

He also recognises the impossibility of practising the horn for hours on end and suggests alternative ways of broadening and deepening a student's musicality:

> "As it is the nature of the horn to prevent the student practising infinitely a wide variety of music, studying the piano, violin or cello as well will be a more successful way of speeding up the development of one's musical faculties; the student who cultivates the horn with one of these instruments at the same time will glean from this the biggest advantages and will add to his study good and useful knowledge."[50]

47 Heinrich Domnich: *Méthode de Premier et de Second Cor*, Paris 1807, p. 91, quoted in Birchard Coar: *A critical study of the nineteenth century horn virtuosi in France*, DeKalb, 1952, p. 38.

48 Louis-François Dauprat: *Méthode de Cor Alto et Cor Basse*, Paris 1824, trans. Viola Roth, Bloomington 1994, vol. 2, p. 117.

49 Gallay: *Méthode*, pp. 9 f.

50 Ibid.

Both of these approaches to tackling issues of stamina are in agreement with suggestions made by Domnich and Dauprat in their Methods. Dauprat qualifies his reservations on preluding thus:

> "One is equally disrespectful of the public in preceding the performance by preluding, which tires and besets the listener, and can entertain only those whose ears can tolerate such cacophony. Such preluding robs the music of some of its effect, and the audience of the pleasure of surprise, since its ears will already be bored with sound before the first notes of the overture or symphony are heard. Even the tuning up is already too much – one should hide the means and show only the results. Some solitary preluding is good preparation for playing, as it establishes the tuning of the instrument, gives the lips suppleness, and the fingers' dexterity. But if you go on and on when before the public, whether to amuse yourself, pass the time, or show off, you can only bore the listeners and make a fool of yourself."[51]

Whilst he recognises some of the benefits of preluding mentioned earlier – in effect "warming up" – key to his criticism of preluding is the ineptitude of the music created; that it does not add to, but detracts from the main piece. With this in mind it is worthwhile considering Dauprat's advice on cadenzas and his examination of the practice of performing cadenzas at the time:

> "There was a time when the endings of first and adagio movements of concerti could not do without a cadenza. The stringed instruments have continued this practice, but the winds have lost it more and more. The horn has not dispensed with them more than the others, as proof of which there are the concerti of Punto. The reason for their abandonment is apparently that players have been spending too little time in that study of melody and harmony necessary for such improvisations or that they are destitute of imagination.
>
> What one is to do during a cadenza is not shown on the printed page. This is so that the performer, whom one is to believe inspired at this moment, can apply himself, as sole master, to his inspirations, and improvise upon his ideas.
>
> These inspirations, these supposed improvisations, are often of long standing, having been completely thought out and elaborated. But this fact is of small importance to the public as long as the cadenza gives it pleasure.
>
> Think about your cadenza, then, as much as you like. Copy it out with meticulous care. If it fits naturally into the piece, and does not cause one to forget the main character – in spite of the apparent disorder it may spread – and if, after all this, it is skilfully played, and a listener may find in it, by turns, expression, warmth, grace, and lightness, you are assured of success.
>
> [...] It is a condition for singers that cadenzas should be sung on one breath, which prevents them from being overlong. But with wind and stringed instruments especially, on which all one's skill and imagination are to be exerted, it rightly seems that one breath would be as insufficient for the former, as a single bow stroke would be for the latter."[52]

Many of these points raised by Dauprat – the skill in apparent "improvisation" (that is, preparation and study providing a solid knowledge on which to draw), the goal of creating

51 Dauprat: *Méthode*, vol. 2, footnote on pp. 120 f.

52 Ibid., pp. 125–127.

a character in keeping with the main work, the ability to sway the audience, and the crucial importance of a deep understanding of melody and harmony – are the same elements involved in effective preluding, and would prevent the faults Dauprat levels at the genre.

Douze grands caprices pour le cor, faisant suite aux études et préludes Op. 32 Rousseau defined a caprice as "a kind of free musical piece, in which the composer, without submitting himself to any theme, gives free reign to his genius, and submits himself to the fire of composition".[53] Caprices in effect are grander preludes, what Czerny would term a "fantasia prelude". The subtitle, "following after the studies and preludes", indicates that the caprice offers a greater challenge than preludes and should only be tackled after the preludes have been mastered. On one occasion Gallay uses the term "caprice" and "prelude" interchangeably – he writes out the *Tenth Caprice*, the briefest of the set, in an autograph book and entitles it "prélude pour cor".[54]

Dedicated to Gallay's friend E. Poignié, the Caprices number twelve in total. Paganini's Twenty-four Caprices are clearly an important model. Whilst many horn players of Gallay's era did not feel that the horn was harmonically limited, when compared to keyboard and string instruments, its possibilities for writing for every key were more challenging. In Part Three of his *Méthode*, Dauprat explains how to play in each key whilst only using the five solo crooks, and in Part One he demonstrates that each crook would be capable of playing eighteen scales, "within the limits of which we will here confine the modulatory faculties of the horn".[55]

Key	Crooks	Key	Crooks
C major	F & G crook	f ♯ minor	D & E
c minor	E ♭	G major	G & D
C ♯ minor	E	g minor	E & F
D major	D & G	g ♯ minor	E
d minor	F	A ♭ major	E ♭
E ♭ major	E ♭	A major	D & E
E major	E	a minor	F & G
e minor	D & G	B ♭ major	E ♭ & F
F major	F	B major	E
f minor	E ♭	b minor	D & G

Illustration 4 Louis-François Dauprat's explanation of how to create each key using only the cor solo crooks

53 Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *Dictionnaire de musique*, Paris 1768, p. 74.

54 Album d'autographes de musique collectionné par Dantan – Fragment autographe de Gallay: Prélude en Fa. Pn Rés. Vm7 537.

55 Dauprat: *Méthode*, vol. 2, p. 57, vol. 1, p. 62.

The Caprices cover thirteen keys in all. The first, fourth, eighth, tenth and twelfth are written mainly in C major, with the third and sixth in G major. The rest are all in minor keys: the second in g minor, the fifth in c minor, the seventh in d minor, the ninth in e minor and the eleventh in a minor. Modulations within the Caprices also cover the major keys of D, A, E, A flat and E flat and the minor key of b.

Gallay does not specify a particular crook for the Caprices; nor does he do so for any of these unaccompanied works for horn. This provides the performer with a wider range of tonalities. The five cor solo crooks that Gallay would have had at his disposal with his 1821 Lucien-Joseph Raoux cor solo (D, E flat, E, F and G) give the performer the following possibilities:

Caprice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Original Key	**C maj**	**g min**	**G maj**	**C maj**	**c min**	**G maj**	**d min**	**C maj**	**e min**	**C maj**	**a min**	**C maj**
D crook	D maj	a min	A maj	D maj	d min	A maj	e min	D maj	f♯ min	D maj	b min	D maj
E♭ crook	E♭ maj	b♭ min	B♭ maj	E♭ maj	e♭ maj	B♭ maj	f min	E♭ maj	g min	E♭ maj	c min	E♭ maj
E crook	E maj	b min	B maj	E maj	e min	B maj	f♯ min	E maj	a♭ min	E maj	c♯ min	E maj
F crook	F maj	c min	C maj	F maj	f min	C maj	g min	F maj	a min	F maj	d min	F maj
G crook	G maj	d min	D maj	G maj	g min	D maj	a min	G maj	b min	G maj	e min	G maj

Illustration 5 Key structure for the Caprices[56]

The *Caprices* are substantial works, longer by far than the *Préludes*, and they require a great technical prowess. Momigny defined a caprice as "a piece full of verve and originality. The whims of a caprice should be only permitted to great composers because they alone can redeem the charm and pleasure that can be lost in these kinds of pieces."[57] Whilst a prelude often serves an introductory purpose, a caprice is designed to be much more characterful. These are independent works rather than merely preludes to more substantial pieces. The character of the individual *Caprices* varies greatly: some are heroic, some tender, some deeply poignant. Each *Caprice* is virtuosic and impressive enough on its own, but the wide variety in character suggests a more substantial work, more in the style of Baillot's "fantasy prelude".

56 The cells unshaded represent the choices made by the author in a recent recording of these works. Available on the Resonus Classics Label (RES10114).

57 Momigny: *Cours complet*, vol. 2, p. 671. "Caprice. Morceau plein de verve et d'originalité. Il ne devrait être permis qu'aux grands compositeurs de faire des caprices parce qu'eux seuls peuvent racheter par le savoir ce qui peut manquer à ces sorte de morceaux du côté du charme et de l'agrément."

20 mélodies gracieuses d'Adam, Bellini, Rossini, Weber etc., arrangées pour le cor Op. 33 | Récréations musicales sur des motifs italiens pour cor seul – 2 suites Op. 44 | Vingt-deux fantaisies mélodiques – 2 suites Op. 58 If the *Quarante préludes* Op. 27 and the *Douze grands caprices* Op. 32 can be viewed as exemplars of fully formed "improvisations" Gallay himself would perform, then these three collections together show more modest "source material" for students wishing to exercise their improvisational skills. Between them these three works provide a rich selection of compositions which range from simple opera melodies or folk song themes to more developed, complex works, either incorporating themes from the Théâtre Italien repertoire, or composed in the style thereof.

These collections, especially the *Mélodies Gracieuses* Op. 33 and the *Récréations Musicales* Op. 44, reflect Gallay's position as cor solo of the Théâtre Italien, although it is his role as first horn of the Musique Particulière du Roi that is trumpeted on the frontispiece of the *Mélodies*. The orchestra of the Théâtre Italien was smaller than that of the Opéra, consisting in 1830 of 46 players. Spohr recounted in his autobiography that at this time Parisians rated the orchestra as not only better than that of the Opéra but indeed "the first in the world".[58] Not all were impressed. In November 1825, shortly after Gallay had joined the Théâtre Italien, the English musician Sir George Smart attended a performance of Giovanni Simone Mayr's *La rosa bianca e la rosa rossa*, and noted that the wind players were "nothing extraordinary with the exception of some very excellent horns".[59] Many factors had contributed to the Théâtre Italien's success, but the impact of the operas of Rossini in 1816 and his huge successes with *L'italiana in Algeri* (1817) and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (1819) were fundamental to the growth in interest in Italian opera buffa. Rossini's appointment as Director of the Théâtre Italien in 1823 further increased the importance of this opera house in French culture. Eventually Rossini was headhunted by the Opéra, and although this did not have an immediate impact on the Théâtre Italien, by the mid-nineteenth century its glory was beginning to fade.

The *Mélodies* are much simpler works than the earlier *Préludes* or *Caprices*. Limited to one page each, they include five themes by Bellini, three each by Donizetti and Rossini, and one each by Weber, Saverio Mercadante and Adolphe Adam. Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini and Mercadante were mainstays of the Théâtre Italien, Adam wrote frequently for the Opéra and Weber's works were to be heard, frequently re-arranged, at the Opéra-Comique and the Théâtre Lyrique. Also included are five songs in a national style: two *Airs Allemands*, an *Air Suisse*, a *Chansonnette Sicilienne* (which includes a simple variation hinting at the wealth of material that can be obtained from such a theme) and an *Air des*

58 Spohr: *Selbstbiographie*, vol. 2, p. 118.

59 *Leaves from the Journals of Sir George Smart*, ed. H. Bertram Cox and C.L.E. Cox, London 1907, p. 228; see also Adam Carse: *The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz*, New York 1949, p. 84.

montagnes du Roussillon. A very different character is suggested in the *Marche d'Alexandre* – a military theme used by Ignaz Moscheles in his *Grandes Variations sur un Thême Militaire* Op. 32.

The *Récréations Musicales* Op. 44 are more explicitly "sur des Motifs Italiens". These twenty-four pieces again favour Donizetti and Bellini, with eleven and five works by them respectively. Other popular composers for the Théâtre Italien are also represented: Giovanni Pacini, Saverio Mercadante and Marco Aurelio Marliani. Nicola Vaccai and Gallay himself each contribute two works to the collection, as well as Giovanni Tadolini, a popular composer, friend of Rossini, and a director of music at the Théâtre Italien (though his operas were never performed there). The *Récréations Musicales* were published in 1839. Two years later Tadolini composed the song *La potenza d'amore* to a text by Carlo Pepoli for Gallay and the tenor Giovanni Battista Rubini. Rubini was noted in Paris for his interpretations of the works of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti.[60]

The *Récréations Musicales* are of a similar length to the *Mélodies Gracieuses* but are in a musical language closer to that of the *Préludes* and *Caprices*. They include more short cadenzas and contrasting sections, though each tends to reflect a single character or atmosphere.

In his *Méthode*, Gallay impresses on the student the importance of being able to interpret and communicate the style and manner of a piece successfully.

> "In a melody, for example, where each phrase is distinguished by a graceful simplicity, the melody must be shown to be simple, naïve and touching. With tact and an instinct, we get to give each piece the expression which suits it: this is what truly constitutes the artist; it is thus that he can reach the sublime art."[61]

Not only would these two collections of works be ideal material with which to perfect this particular skill, but they could easily be used as material from which to compose a larger

60 Whilst the frontispiece of the Bernard Latte edition (1841) includes the dedication to Gallay, a version of the piece exists in the privately held Covert Collection which includes manuscripts by the horn player Giovanni Puzzi. Here the horn obligato is described as being for Puzzi. In the 1830s Rubini, Tadolini and Gallay would have been all working at the Théâtre Italien in Paris. Rubini and Puzzi performed together in England in the 1830s and Puzzi was one of the musicians involved in Rubini's 1842 "Farewell Tour". This may well be evidence of tactical re-appropriation of the dedication by one or another musician or publisher. Further information on Puzzi and *La Potenza d'Amore* is to be found in Elizabeth Bradley Strauchen: *Giovanni Puzzi; his Life and Work; a View of Horn Playing and Musical Life in England from 1817 into the Victorian Era* (c. 1855), DPhil, University of Oxford, 2000; and Elizabeth Bradley Strauchen: Lost Luggage. Giovanni Puzzi and the Management of Giovanni Rubini's Farewell Tour in 1842, in: *Music in the British Provinces 1690–1914*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Peter Holman, Aldershot 2007, pp. 237–255.

61 Gallay: *Méthode*, p. 91.

fantasia. Gallay composed as many as 23 works for horn and piano or orchestra based on themes from operas and romances. Again he favoured composers associated with the Théâtre Italien, but also incorporated themes by other composers, most notably writers of "Romances". Bearing in mind that one of the key elements of Italian opera of this time was the ability of singers to embellish material, both Gallay's Op. 33 and Op. 44 provide perfect source material for musicians wishing to improvise small or large-scale fantasias on these themes.

Gallay's 22 *Fantaisies Mélodiques* Op. 58 are very much in keeping with his Op. 33 and Op. 44. None of the works in this set are more than a page long, but they are all compositions by Gallay rather than transcriptions of works by his contemporaries. Much of the musical language is recognisable from the other works: highly operatic, yet not as virtuosic as the *Préludes* or *Caprices* discussed earlier, and with fewer modulations. Some of the themes found here can be identified in other of Gallay's works, such as the theme from the final movement of his *Grand Quatuor* Op. 26 which is used in the third of the *Fantaises Mélodiques*. The *Fantaisies Mélodiques* offer a selection of Gallay's own themes which could be treated in a similar fashion to those themes he had borrowed from his contemporaries.

In his *Méthode*, Gallay includes a sizeable article on the contentious issue of taste. In it he rightly suggests that taste is a child of its time, stating that "Taste is closely linked to the requirements of fashion, to the caprices of the times, and sometimes it is merely a term of convenience to make a piece be composed or performed in a certain way, finding itself more or less in line with generally accepted ideas."[62]

Preluding and improvisation, or fantasias on popular themes, remained an important part of musical performance up until the early twentieth century. We are fortunate to have a number of early recordings that feature pianists of the time demonstrating this art, which is no longer practised today.[63] Despite today's great interest in historically informed performance, there has as yet been little practical exploration of this important aspect of performance practice. Many of Gallay's compositions for unaccompanied horn have remained in the repertoire as pedagogical material rather than as pieces for the concert platform. Later in his article on "Taste", Gallay urges horn players to

> "[…] forget for a moment the mechanism of the horn, let us forget all the studies and perseverance that was needed so that one would manage to be among the small number of those who have pushed the limits; let us leave aside the principles of methods; let us see the results, forget about the means, if we no longer consider the horn as a brass instrument but instead as an organised voice that can translate and transmit the impressions it has received and wants to excite in others, whether expressing

62 Gallay: *Méthode*, pp. 90 f.

63 For further discussion of preluding, improvisation and early recordings see Hamilton: *After the Golden Age*, and Neal Peres da Costa: *Off the Record. Performing Practices in Romantic Piano Playing*, Oxford 2012.

its own song or inspired by the work of others. Does the horn not try to paint the condition of the soul? The passions of the heart? Does it not have joyous accents for pleasure as it has tears for pain?"[64]

Whilst Gallay has often been championed as one of the last virtuoso hand horn players, his legacy as a preluder has been overlooked. Gallay's performances did much to justify the continued use of the hand horn during the nineteenth century and, whilst other horn players such as Dauprat and Duvernoy were well regarded for their solo performances, Gallay is regarded as an equal alongside all other top performers, both instrumentalists and singers. His inclusion in the "Artistes Contemporains" illustrates clearly his affinity with these musicians, many of whom were equally renowned for their own compositions and "improvisations". As a musician heavily involved in Italian music, his own compositions demonstrate this ornamented, fantasia style popular in France during the mid-nineteenth century.

Today the practice of preluding can be seen as having multiple benefits. For the modern performer, whether it is a matter of integrating it into his or her public performances or simply exploring it in the privacy of the practice room, there is much to be gained both musically and technically. Its absence from the concert hall today may reflect current taste, but the flexibility and musicality encouraged by preluding or composing caprices, fantasies or variations is to be recommended to all musicians, especially those with an interest in the music of this particular period.

The art of preluding is a precarious one. Baillot warned that "once the artist has undertaken them [preludes], they become for him one more hidden danger or cause for triumph".[65] The fact that the practice appealed to Gallay may not be surprising, given that Fétis remarked with amusement on how Gallay seemed to relish the tricky nature of the "adventurous" horn.[66] Recently, Edward Deskur[67] has produced a postcard featuring a photograph of Nikolaus Harnoncourt with Harnoncourt's sage advice given in a rehearsal to horn players he felt were playing too cautiously. Harnoncourt's words, like Baillot's, sum up exactly why exploring preluding would be worthwhile for modern musicians: "Music is like life, it begins to get interesting when it is played on the edge of catastrophe."

64 Gallay: *Méthode*, p. 91.

65 Baillot: *L'Art du Violon*, p. 184, English translation in Stowell: *Violin Technique*, p. 357.

66 François-Joseph Fétis: Soirée Musicale de. M. Dietz, in: *Revue musicale* 3 (March 1829), No. 7, pp. 160–163, here p. 162.

67 Horn player with ensembles including Philharmonia Zurich (Zurich Opera), Concentus Musicus Wien, Il Giardino Armonico.

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Herausgegeben von Daniel Allenbach, Adrian von Steiger und Martin Skamletz

Musikforschung der
Hochschule der Künste Bern

Herausgegeben von Martin Skamletz
und Thomas Gartmann

Band 6

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