

KEYBOARD DUETS

from the 16th to the 20th Century
for One and Two Pianos

AN INTRODUCTION

Howard Ferguson

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Preface

Keyboard duets, whether for one instrument or two, are among the most enjoyable forms of music-making in which pianists can take part. Moreover, they provide pianists with invaluable experience in ensemble playing, which is all too often lacking from the lives of those who sit and work alone at a keyboard.

In the following pages the majority of works discussed were written for the modern pianoforte. Also included, however, are many that would have been played originally on one or other of the pianoforte's ancestors: the fortepiano, the harpsichord, or the virginals. Nevertheless, for convenience, any work intended for two (or more) players on one instrument will here be termed a 'piano duet', while 'two pianos' will indicate a work for two players on two instruments.

It is often thought that piano duets consist mainly of arrangements of classical symphonies, overtures, and string quartets. Doubtless this is because so many were published in the days before radio and gramophone provided easier (though not necessarily better) ways of getting to know the orchestral and chamber-music repertoire. But this is a misconception. The essence of any duo is that it should establish the separate identity of two performers, while at the same time displaying their equally important unity. In a piano duet these rival demands must be fulfilled while each player is confined to a single half of one and the same instrument. In two-piano music, on the other hand, the players are using two separate instruments, but ones that are identical in compass and tone-colour. Hence each medium poses entirely different problems; and since any good composer makes capital out of limitations, the type of work he writes for one medium will be quite different from what he would write for the other. For this reason it is a mistake to play a piano duet on two pianos. It may be easier that way: but it is a waste of

means, and a denial of the particular restrictions that have conditioned the music.

The book is divided into three main sections. Chapter 1 describes the chronology of piano duets and two-piano music, from their earliest beginnings in the 16th century to the present day; Chapter 2 discusses some of the special problems that arise when playing them; and Chapter 3 provides a selective list of works of genuine musical and/or historical interest that were originally written for one medium or the other.¹ Arrangements are not included, other than some that were made by a composer of a work of his own (e.g. Beethoven's piano-duet version, Op. 134, of his *Grosse Fuge*, Op. 133, for string quartet), or of the work of another composer that is of special interest (e.g. Ravel's two-piano version of Debussy's orchestral Nocturnes).

A plea to any music publisher who happens to read this. Prior to the present century piano duets were invariably printed with primo and secondo on facing pages, and two-piano works with pianos I and II in separate books. Doubtless this saved a certain amount of paper, and marginally made the music easier for beginners to read. But it is infinitely preferable to have it set out in score —i.e. with the primo (or piano I) staves printed *above* the secondo (or piano II). This enables each player to see what his partner is meant to be doing; and, more important still, to grasp the texture as a whole.

My warmest thanks are due to Dr John Caldwell for generously sharing information concerning the earliest English composers from his forthcoming volume *Tudor Keyboard Music* (*Musica Britannica*, lxvi; Stainer & Bell); to Richard Drakeford for many helpful suggestions; to Brian Hill of the New York branch of the OUP for providing much of the information concerning American works included in Chapter 3; and lastly, to Bruce Phillips and my copy-editor, Rowena Anketell, of the Oxford University Press, for constant help and encouragement.

H.F.

Cambridge 1993–4

¹ For a comprehensive listing of piano duets and two-piano music, see Cameron McGraw's *Piano Duet Repertoire* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1981), and Maurice Hinson's *Music for More than One Piano* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1983) respectively.

To the memory of
HAROLD SAMUEL (1879–1937)
who introduced me to piano duets seventy-odd years ago;
ARNOLD VAN WYK (1916–83)
who explored duets with me during the Second World War; and
DENIS MATTHEWS (1919–88)
with whom I performed duets for twenty-five years

1 Chronology

PRE-CLASSICAL

The limited size and compass of early instruments gave little encouragement to duet-playing on a single keyboard. That of a 16th-century virginals measured roughly two feet from end to end, so two players would have been far from comfortable playing on it side by side, particularly in the voluminous clothing of the period. In spite of this, the earliest undisputed keyboard duets that have survived were written by English virginalist composers in the 16th or early 17th century. They are: *A Fancy for two to play*, by Thomas Tomkins (1572–1640), and *A Verse for two to play on one virginal or organ* by Tomkins's friend Nicholas Carlton (d. 1630). The Carlton *Verse* shows no special understanding of the medium, but Tomkins's *Fancy* is a genuinely idiomatic duet. Its antiphonal and imitative procedures were undoubtedly derived from choral techniques; but they are also well suited to establishing the separate identity of the two players, while the closer fugal writing shows off their equally important unity.

Considering how much more practical a duet for two keyboards would have been, it is surprising that only a single English work of the period specifies them: the *[Alman] for Two Virginals* by Giles Farnaby (c.1563–1640).

However, some half-dozen English pieces of the same period or earlier were certainly intended as duets of one sort or another. They are written on three staves, but without instrumental designation. Two of the staves are undoubtedly meant for a keyboard player, while the third (generally a repetitive bass or treble) could have been taken by either a separate melodic instrument, or by a third hand on the same (or another) keyboard (see p. 2, below). Examples of such works are the *Ut re mi fa sol la, for two to play* by William Byrd (1543–1623), and *A Battle and no Battle (Phrygian Music)* by John Bull

(1563–1628). The Bull *Battle* could well have been intended for a single instrument, for the extra part—an eight-note ground bass—never encroaches on the territory of the principal player. In Byrd's *Ut re mi*, on the other hand, the third part consists of five treble repetitions of the upward and downward scale of the hexachord; and as this would involve collisions on a single instrument, the piece was probably intended for two.

No keyboard duets have survived from the second half of the 17th century, though it is hard to believe that none was written. The earliest we know of are included in the *Pièces de clavecin*, 1705, of Gaspard Le Roux (d. c.1707). The volume contains some forty pieces for solo harpsichord, together with a trio version of the majority of them. The latter are printed on three staves, with the *sujet* on top, the *contre partie* in the middle, and the *basse* (figured bass) on the bottom line. In his preface Le Roux explains that they can be played in a number of ways, one of which is on two harpsichords. He shows how this should be done by adding five transcriptions at the end of the volume (plus an extra piece that does not appear elsewhere). From these it is clear that the first player takes the *sujet*, the second the *contre partie*, and both contribute an extemporary realization of the figured bass. Unfortunately the only existing modern edition of the *Pièces* omits all the trio versions; so the only duets by Le Roux that can be played at present are the six that he himself arranged for two harpsichords and added at the end of his volume.

Five similar three-stave pieces—but with the bass-line unfigured—are to be found in Books 3 and 4 (1722 and 1730) of the *Pièces de clavecin* of François Couperin (1668–1733). These are intended for two players; and Couperin calls them *pièces croisées* because the two upper parts cross one another continually. He notes on one of them, 'La Julliet', that it can be played 'on two harpsichords or spinets, with the *sujet* (top line) and *basse* (bottom line) on one, and the same *basse* and the *contre partie* (middle line) on the other. Similarly with the other pieces printed on three staves.'

The 'Allemande à deux Clavecins' from his Book 2 (1713) is the only piece François Couperin wrote specifically for two harpsichords. It is a magnificent richly textured work, and is printed in the original edition in the normal way, i.e. with one pair of staves above the other.

A later member of the dynasty, Armand-Louis Couperin (1727–89) wrote at least four works for two harpsichords, of which only two have survived: the second of three *Quatuors à deux clavecins*, c.1772, and a *Simphonie de clavecins*, c.1774. They are less interesting as music than for the fact that the *Simphonie* contains indications such as *buffle* (a stop or register) and 'cresc.', which show that the work was intended for harpsichords that possessed not only two manuals, but also knee-levers that allowed crescendos and diminuendos to be made.

Some curious duets for two harpsichords were written in Italy at the beginning of the 18th century by Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710). They are preserved in a manuscript in the British Library, and consist of 14 three-movement sonatas, of which no more than the figured bass for each instrument was provided. Not surprisingly, this meagre form of notation was not copied by later composers.

Of the three great keyboard composers born in 1685, Bach alone composed significant duets for two harpsichords. Domenico Scarlatti (d. 1757) wrote none, and George Frideric Handel (d. 1759) produced no more than a single youthful *Suite à deux clavecins*, of which the second harpsichord part no longer exists. At least two works by Johann Sebastian Bach (d. 1750) were originally conceived for a pair of harpsichords: the Concerto No. 2 in C, BWV 1061 (see below), and the extraordinary two harpsichord version of the invertible Contrapunctus XIII from *Die Kunst der Fuge* (*The Art of Fugue*), BWV 1088. The remaining concertos for two, three, and four harpsichords (and all those for one) are probably his own arrangements of works by himself or others.

The Art of Fugue, Bach's last work, was published in the year after his death. It consists mainly of thirteen fugues of varying complexity, all based on the same theme. Like many recondite earlier works (e.g. Frescobaldi's *Il primo libro di capricci*, 1624, and Froberger's MS *Libro di capricci e ricercate*, c.1658), the fugues are set out in open score, i.e. with a separate staff for each contrapuntal line, thus enabling the part-writing to be followed more easily. For many years this led to the assumption that Bach had no particular instrument(s) in mind for performance of the work. In 1931, however, Donald Francis Tovey pointed out that all the fugues, with the exception of

Contrapunctus XII (in four parts) and Contrapunctus XIII (in three), both invertible, lay within the compass of a single pair of hands, and were undoubtedly intended as solo keyboard music.

In order to make Contrapunctus XIII equally available to keyboard players, Bach added a free fourth part to both rectus and inversus versions, thus turning them into two sparkling pieces for two harpsichords.

The six so-called 'Organ' Trio-Sonatas, BWV 525–30, can be played very enjoyably on two pianos (see p. 46), though there is no documentary justification for doing so. They were written c.1727 for the instruction of Bach's eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann, and are described in the MS source merely as being 'für zwey Claviere und Pedal' (for two manuals and pedals). Nowadays they are generally heard on the organ; but originally they would also have been played on the pedal-harpsichord—an instrument used by organists for home practice. Since Bach later rewrote the Adagio of the Third Sonata as the slow movement of his Triple Concerto in A minor, BWV 1044, for flute, violin, and harpsichord, it is perhaps not so reprehensible to suggest playing the Trio Sonatas on two pianos. Also playable on two pianos are the 14 Canons, BWV 1087, on the first eight notes of the bass of the 'Goldberg' Variations, discovered as recently as 1974. They were written by Bach himself on a blank page at the end of his own printed copy of the Variations. A possible performing sequence is suggested in the introduction to the Bärenreiter edition of the Canons.

The three Bach concertos for two harpsichords: No. 1 in C minor, No. 2 in C major, and No. 3 in D minor, BWV 1060–2 (as well as those for three and four harpsichords) were all written with string orchestral accompaniment. But the latter can be omitted, as the harpsichord parts are complete in themselves.

Three of Bach's sons composed keyboard duets. Wilhelm Friedemann (1710–84), wrote the three-movement Duetto in F, F. 10, which, surprisingly enough, was edited by Brahms as a work by Johann Sebastian and first published in 1864. Later it reappeared with the same misattribution in vol. xliii (1894) of the great *Bachgesellschaft* edition. The final volume (1899) corrected the composer's name, but only in a footnote; yet the work is so obviously later in style than Johann Sebastian that it is hard to imagine how anyone—least of all Brahms—could have ascribed it to him. Wilhelm Friedemann also

wrote the Concerto in E flat, F. 46, for two harpsichords, strings, horns, and timpani.

The second son, Carl Philipp Emanuel (1714–88), produced four duet works: two Sonatinas, No. 1 in D, H. 453 and No. 2 in B flat, H. 459, for two harpsichords accompanied by various instruments; the Concerto Doppio in F, H. 410 for two harpsichords, two horns, and strings; and a Concerto Doppio, in E flat, H. 479, for harpsichord and the recently developed fortepiano, two horns, and strings.

The youngest son, Johann Christian (1735–82)—who settled in England in 1762 and was known as 'the London Bach'—was an enthusiastic advocate of the new instrument. His four undoubtedly authentic duettos were published in London in two volumes of miscellaneous keyboard works suitable for either the fortepiano or harpsichord (1778 and 1781). The two duets in the first volume, Op. 15, one in G and one in C, are for respectively two instruments and one, while those in the second, Op. 18, are both for a single instrument, in A and F.

CLASSICAL

Three factors combined to encourage the cultivation of piano duets from the last quarter of the 18th century. First, the gradual increase in the compass of instruments; secondly, the growth of music publishing; and lastly, the rise of a wealthy professional and merchant class, which could afford to have its daughters taught the newly fashionable fortepiano. Works for two pianos were also being published; but they were less in demand, for not everyone could afford the cost, or the space in the home, for two instruments.

In 1777 the music historian and composer Dr Charles Burney (1726–1814) announced that his two sets of *Four Sonatas or Duets for Two Performers on one Pianoforte or Harpsichord*, published by R. Bremner of London, were 'the first that have appeared in print of this kind'. Whether Burney's claim was justified or not, his eight two-movement sonatas are notable for little besides their priority.

At about the same time, but on the continent, Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) was writing his only two piano duets. Each consists of two movements, of

which the second is a Menuet. Considering the superb quality of most of his solo keyboard music, the duets are disappointing. The first movement of *Il maestro e lo scolare* (The Master and the Pupil), Hob. XVIIa/1, is a set of variations in which the Pupil (primo) dutifully echoes every short phrase of the Master (secondo), while the latter remains silent. The Partita, Hob. XVIIa/2, is more adventurous; but even the charming Menuet finale cannot disguise the work's immaturity. Haydn also wrote the Concerto in G for two harpsichords, Hob. XVIII: G2, accompanied by strings and two horns. It was published by Skillern of London in 1782, in an anonymous arrangement for two harpsichords without accompaniment.

Many didactic piano duets were soon being published. Few of them have much musical interest; but some, however slight, reveal genuine individuality: for example, the four books by Daniel Gottlob Türk (1750–1813) issued during 1807–8 with the enticing title *Thirty Pieces for 4 Hands, Dedicated to Aspiring Players of the Klavier [harpsichord or clavichord] and Fortepiano*. Though undemanding technically, they are always musical and well written for the medium.

More significant as a duet composer was the Italian Muzio Clementi (1752–1832). Like the 'London Bach' he settled in England, and there founded an important publishing and fortepiano-making firm. Among his 62 solo sonatas are a number of works for piano duet and two pianos, some of which were included in volumes with solo sonatas. Thus his Op. 3 contains three solo sonatas, plus the piano duets in C, E flat, and G; but Op. 14 is entirely devoted to the duets in C, F, and E flat. The two sonatas in B flat for two pianos are included in Op. 1bis and Op. 12 respectively.

Clementi was also famous as a performer; and during one of his many continental tours he was invited by the Austrian emperor, Joseph II, to take part in a musical contest with the 25-year-old Mozart. The outcome was left discreetly undecided; but Mozart's opinion was not. He wrote to his Father: 'Clementi plays well, so far as execution with the right hand goes . . . Apart from that, he has not a kreutzer's worth of taste or feeling—in short he is a mere *mechanicus*.'

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91) was himself the first of the two greatest writers of piano duets. When visiting London as a child prodigy in

company with his father and sister, he was befriended by J. C. Bach and profoundly influenced by him. It is said that the two improvised duets with Wolfgang seated on Johann Christian's knee. Certainly it is likely that they also played in a more orthodox way, for it was surely Bach's example that fired the boy to compose his own first duet, the Sonata in C, K. 19d, written at the age of 9. It also seems probable that this was one of the pieces that he and his sister performed daily for the public at the Swan and Hoop tavern in Cornhill, following the newspaper announcement that 'the two children will play upon the same Harpsichord, and put upon it a Handkerchief, without seeing the keys'. Though immature, the Sonata shows a remarkable instinctive grasp of the stylistic requirements of a duet.

Strangely enough, it remained entirely unknown until 1921, when a single printed copy was discovered in the Bibliothèque Nationale by George de Saint-Foix. It had been very inaccurately engraved by a Mlle Rickert and published in 1791 or 1792 by De Roullède of Paris. How the work got into his hands is a mystery. Sixteen years after composing the Sonata Mozart reused the main theme of its third movement for the Finale of the great Wind Serenade in B flat, K. 361 (370a),¹ but altered the tempo from Allegretto to Molto Allegro.

The next two sonatas, No. 2 in D, K. 381 (K⁷. 123a) and No. 3 in B flat, K⁷. 358 (186c), were written during Mozart's late teens. They are pleasant little works, if not specially remarkable, and were probably intended, like the early C major, for playing on the harpsichord with his sister Nannerl.

The last two sonatas, No. 4 in F, K. 497, and No. 5 in C, K. 521, are on an altogether different plane. Composed at the periods of *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* respectively, they are mature masterpieces and obviously intended for the fortepiano. Indeed, the F major Sonata is one of Mozart's finest keyboard works, and a fit companion to the great string quintets and symphonies.

It opens with a long and solemn Adagio introduction, which immediately sets the scale of the work. This leads into an equally impressive though more light-hearted Allegro. The central Andante opens serenely, but has a whimsical second subject which is later developed into astonishing four-part

¹ The bracketed K-numbers give the revised chronology of the 6th and 7th edns. of Koechel's *Thematic Catalogue* (1965).

counterpoint, of which Tovey wrote that 'four Chinese dragons might achieve its august poise and agility'. The brilliant final Rondo is on a scale commensurate with that of the opening Allegro. Just as it is about to end there is a magical and wholly unexpected 5-bar passage (bb. 313–17), which, as can be seen from the autograph, was an afterthought that Mozart slipped in after the movement had been finished.

After this altogether magnificent sonata the later one in C major, K. 521, seems a slight disappointment. Though still on the grand scale, it is more coolly formal than the F major, and lacks the burning intensity and very personal quality of the latter. The delightful Variations in G, K. 501, on the other hand, are every bit as fine in their much slighter way as the Sonata, K. 497.

As often happens with Mozart, one of the above works has an unfinished twin: the tantalizing two-movement so-called Sonata in G, K. 357 (497a), whose first movement is now thought to be contemporary with the Sonata in F, K. 497. It was first published posthumously in 1796 by J. André of Offenbach, who himself completed both movements—an Allegro, and an Andante with Variations and a Coda. His edition indicates that the first 98 bars of the Allegro—i.e. up to b. 9 of the development—are by Mozart; and this is probably true, though no autograph has survived to prove it. But several questions hang over the Andante. First, it is in the same key as the Allegro, which, if intended as the middle movement of a sonata, is altogether un-Mozartian. And secondly, though André claims that the first 160 bars are genuine, it is hard to believe that Mozart could have written the weak question and answer (à la Haydn's *Il maestro e lo scolare*) of bb. 1–III, and impossible to believe that bb. 112–60 are his. It seems much more likely that André was mistaken in thinking that the unfinished Andante belonged to the Allegro, and indeed that it was by Mozart.

Another unfinished work included in some editions of the piano duets is the Fugue in G minor, K. 401 (375e), now thought to be contemporary with a group of fugues begun in 1782 in response to his wife Constanza's enthusiasm for the form. No instrument is specified in the autograph, but it was first published posthumously in 1800 as a piano solo. The last eight of its 103 bars were added by the Abbé Stadler, who completed a number of Mozart's unfinished works at Constanza's request.

Two magnificent works included in most editions of the piano duets, are the Adagio and Allegro in F minor, K. 594, and the Fantasie in F minor, K. 608. Both were written for 'a mechanical organ in a clock'—for which Mozart expressed the liveliest distaste. They were commissioned by Count von Deym for an instrument that was included in an exhibition of plastercasts of ancient sculpture, which he called 'Müller's Art-Gallery'. The autographs have not survived; but contemporary copies suggest that they were written as four-stave scores. When first published posthumously in 1790 and 1791 respectively, it was in the form of anonymous arrangements for piano duet. Both have three-part structures: the Adagio and Allegro slow–fast–slow, and the Fantasie fast–slow–fast. Though most often heard in arrangements for organ, they make magnificent duets.

Mozart completed four works for two pianos: a sonata, a fugue, and two concertos of which the earlier was originally for three pianos.

The Sonata in D, K. 448 (375a), was composed specially for a private concert held on 23 November 1781 at the home of Johann Michael Auernhammer in Vienna. His daughter Josepha was a pupil of Mozart, and together they played the new sonata and the Concerto in E flat (see below), 'all with great success', as Mozart reported to his father the following day. The Sonata, a brilliant, light-hearted work, proves that Fräulein Auernhammer must have been a very efficient pianist.

The Fugue in C minor, K. 426, written in December 1783, could hardly be more different. Though enormously skilful in its use of every sort of fugal device, it is one of the harshest, most forbidding works that Mozart ever wrote. During the final 14 bars the almost unbearable tension relaxes somewhat; but even there the basses remain strictly canonic.

Five years later he scored this fugue for string orchestra (not for string quartet, as is sometimes said), prefacing it with a powerfully tragic Adagio in C minor. The pair, now numbered K. 546, go so perfectly together that it is surely allowable to play them on two pianos, even though the Adagio was not arranged by Mozart himself.

There are several unfinished works for two pianos. The earliest, dated 1781, is a recently discovered Larghetto and Allegro in E flat, of which Mozart wrote piano I of the 108-bar exposition and parts of piano II, while Anton

Stadler completed the latter. More characteristic is the *Grave and Presto in B flat*, K.Anh. 42 (375b), of which Mozart completed 60 bars of both parts. Fifteen bars of a Sonata in B flat, K.Anh. 43 (375c), and 23 bars of a *Fugue in G*, K.Anh. 45 (375d), are more fragmentary; as is the somewhat later 22-bar *Allegro in C minor*, K.Anh. 44 (426a).

The great Concerto in E flat for two pianos, K. 365 (316a), was written in Salzburg about 1779, probably for himself and his sister Nannerl to play. The earlier Concerto in F, for three pianos, K. 242, is a slighter work. It was written in 1776 for Countess Antonia Lodron and her two daughters, the younger of whom cannot have been very accomplished. Mozart tempered the wind to the shorn lamb by making piano III fairly simple; so much so, indeed, that he was later able to omit it altogether and turn the work into a concerto for two pianos. (For further information about these concertos see p. 73, below.)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) produced no mature duets comparable to those of Mozart. Nevertheless, his four early works are enjoyable additions to the repertoire. They consist of the *Variations in C on a Theme by Count Waldstein*, WoO 67; the two-movement Sonata in D, Op. 6; a lovely set of *Variations in D on the Song 'Ich denke dein'*, WoO 74, part of which was written originally for the autograph album of the sisters Josephine and Therese Brunsvik; and the 3 Marches, Op. 45, which, though slight, could only be by Beethoven. The *Grosse Fuge*, Op. 134, included in the Henle edition, is the composer's own arrangement of the *Grosse Fuge*, Op. 133, for string quartet. It is one of his very greatest works, but so unpianistic and so awkwardly laid out as to be unrewarding as a duet. He wrote no two-piano music.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) also wrote nothing for two pianos; but together with Mozart, he was one of the two greatest of all composers of piano duets. His earliest surviving work is for the medium: the rambling *Fantasie in G*, D. 1, written at the age of 13. It is over a thousand bars long, and shows few signs of the genius who, only four years later, was to produce the masterly setting for voice and piano of 'Gretchen am Spinnrade', D. 118, with text from Goethe's *Faust*. He continued to write piano duets throughout his life, particularly significant periods being in 1818, 1824, and 1828.

For five or six months in 1818, and again in 1824, Schubert was engaged by Count Johann Karl Esterházy as music-teacher to his two teenage daughters

while the family was staying at their country seat at Zseliz in Slovakia. As an encouragement to duet-playing, he provided the young ladies with some dozen new works of his own. In addition to groups of dances and marches, these included the charming Sonata in B flat, D. 617, the *Introduction and Variations in B flat on an Original Theme*, D. 603 No. 2, and the *Variations in E minor on a French Song*, D. 624. The two sets of variations are of interest mainly for other than musical reasons: D. 624 was dedicated to Beethoven 'from his admirer and worshipper Franz Schubert', while D. 603 remained entirely unknown until 1860. In that year it was published by Schuberth and Co. of Hamburg as a companion to their reissue of the then popular but vapid *Variations on a Theme from Hérold's Opera 'Marie'*, D. 603 No. 1, originally issued in 1827 by Haslinger of Vienna. The publisher assumed it had been written at the same time as the latter; but clearly it is much earlier, and probably dates from the same period as the Sonata in B flat.

The second stay at Zseliz produced fewer but more important works. The first was the Sonata in C, D. 812 (known as the 'Grand Duo'), which is one of the few Schubert duets that sounds as though it might have been intended for orchestra. (Joseph Joachim *did* orchestrate it in 1855.) Passages such as the tremendous, bare six-octave fortissimos towards the end of the Finale sound futile on the piano, but as orchestral tuttis would be shattering. Nevertheless, the work as a whole is so fine—particularly the ravishing slow movement—that duettists will always want to play it. Incidentally, the technique of the two young Countesses must have improved considerably during Schubert's four-year absence, for the work is extremely difficult to play.

Less demanding, but equally fine, are the *Variations in A flat on an Original Theme*, D. 813, one of the loveliest of all the duet works, whose 7th variation contains some of the most poignant harmonic progressions ever invented by Schubert. Comparison with the sets of variations written in 1818 shows how much Schubert himself had developed in the intervening years. Altogether easier are the 4 *Ländler*, D. 814, which are really two pairs in which No. 1 of each pair is repeated after No. 2, thus making an ABA group. Slight though they are, they are just as enchanting as any of Schubert's 330 dances for piano solo, and must have given special delight to their youthful performers.

The *Divertissement à la hongroise*, D. 818, is a curious, large-scale work. Its sprawling first and third movements, strongly influenced by gipsy music, are separated by a demure March which seems to come from another world. The last movement itself is an enormously lengthened version of the solo piano *Hungarian Melody*, D. 817, which remained unpublished until as recently as 1928.

Schubert wrote seventeen Marches for piano duet, of which half a dozen are musically outstanding. The most famous—which has been arranged for every imaginable medium—is No. 1 in B minor of the 3 *Marches militaires*, D. 733, dating from either 1818 or 1824. Equally fine are Nos. 2, 3, and 5 from the 6 *Grandes Marches*, D. 819 (1824), the little-known No. 5 in E flat minor being specially beautiful. It is a funeral march (though not so named), and is infinitely more moving than the pretentious *Grande Marche funèbre*, D. 859, written in 1825 on the death of Tsar Alexander I. The genre is rounded off by the 2 *Marches caractéristiques*, D. 886 (1826), both in quick-march 6/8 time, the first tempestuous and the second more gentle.

Two other works from these betwixt-and-between years are noteworthy: the three-movement *Divertissement sur des motifs originaux français*, D. 823 Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (1826–7), because of the great beauty of its middle movement, plus its strange publication history; and the March in G ('Kindermarsch'), D. 928, because of its touching origin. The *Divertissement* was first published by Thaddäus Weigl of Vienna, not as the single work that Schubert undoubtedly intended, but in two separate parts: the first in 1826 as *Divertissement en forme d'une marche brillant*, Op. 63 No. 1; and the second in 1827 as *Andantino varié et Rondeau brillant*, Op. 84 (not, as one would expect, Op. 63 Nos. 2 and 3). Doubtless Weigl was hoping the separation would promote sales. The first and third movements are not specially striking; but the *Andantino varié* is one of Schubert's loveliest sets of variations. Fortunately it stands on its own perfectly convincingly. The March in G was an answer to the request of Frau Marie Pachler—Schubert's hostess during a visit to Graz—for a duet to play with her 8-year-old son Faust, as a surprise on the name-day of the boy's father. It was written in Vienna on 12 October 1827, sent to Graz by Schubert with a note saying he was not 'exactly made for this kind of composition', and duly performed on the great day, 4 November.

The last year of Schubert's life, 1828, saw the composition of his piano-duet masterpiece, the *Fantasie* in F minor, D. 940. Like the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, D. 760 (1822) for solo piano, it anticipates Liszt's practice of including all the elements of a full-blown sonata within a single structure. In the present work there are four contrasting sections: (1) Allegro Molto Moderato in F minor; (2) Largo in the surprising key of F sharp minor; (3) a scherzo-like Allegro Vivace in the same key (with a Trio in D); and (4) recapitulation of the opening material and key, leading to a powerful Fugue and Coda. In all, it is one of his finest works.

Also written in the same year were the Allegro in A minor ('Lebensstürme'), D. 947, and the entrancing Rondo in A, D. 951, both isolated works. Magnificent though the Allegro is, it has a slightly inconclusive ending that suggests Schubert had originally intended it to be the opening movement of a large-scale work that alas was never written. The Rondo, on the other hand, is so perfect in its gently flowing lyricism as to be entirely complete in itself.

ROMANTIC

Though Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826) was born eleven years before Schubert, his music clearly belongs to the Romantic rather than the Classical era. He wrote three sets of piano duets: *Six Pieces*, Op. 3; *Six Pieces*, Op. 10; and *Eight Pieces*, Op. 60. They are primarily instructional works, and vary considerably in both their technical demands and their musical interest; but the best of them, such as the *Adagio in A flat*, Op. 10 No. 5, have a warmth and charm that is typical of the composer. It is interesting to note that three of the pieces, wittily reharmonized, form the basis of Hindemith's orchestral *Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*.

The piano duets of the near-contemporaries Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47) and Robert Schumann (1810–56) form only a minor part of their output. Mendelssohn wrote two mature works for the medium: a rather disappointing *Andante and Variations in B flat*, Op. 83a, and the sparkling *Allegro brillant* in A, Op. 92, which is one of the most technically demanding works in the repertoire. In his early 'teens the remarkable boy wrote two

Concertos for two pianos: No. 1 in E (1823) and No. 2 in A flat (1824). Neither was published during his lifetime; and because of Hitler's anti-Jewish laws during the mid-20th century they did not appear in print until comparatively recently (1960). Both are astonishing productions for a boy of his age, though only No. 2 shows an occasional glimpse of the genius that was soon to write the miraculous String Octet, Op. 20 (1825), and the Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 21 (1826). He himself played No. 1 with his sister Fanny; but wisely cut out some eighty bars of the repeated passages in which he was then all too inclined to indulge.

A curiosity that should be mentioned, though unavailable in a modern edition, is the *Duo concertante en variations brillantes* for two pianos and optional orchestra, on a march from Weber's opera *La Preciosa*. It was published c.1833 as Op. 87b of Mendelssohn's friend Ignaz Moscheles (1793–1870), but in fact was their joint composition. The Introduction and Variations 1 and 2 are by Mendelssohn, Variations 3 and 4 by Moscheles, while both composers contributed to the lengthy Finale. It was later basically rewritten for piano duet, but without orchestral accompaniment.

The four sets of piano duets by Schumann are: *Bilder aus Osten* (6 *Impromptus*), Op. 66; *12 vierhändige Klavier-Stücke*, Op. 85; *Ball-Scenen* (9 *characteristische Stücke*), Op. 109; and *Kinderball* (6 *leichte Tänze*), Op. 130. Like the Weber pieces, they are didactic in aim, but their musical interest is consistently higher.

Schumann's *Andante and Variations in B flat*, Op. 46, for two pianos is a much more considerable work. It was originally written in 1843 for the unusual combination of two pianos, two cellos, and horn. But when Schumann tried it over in that form with Mendelssohn he was dissatisfied with the tonal balance, and rescored it for two pianos alone, omitting some of the variations when he did so.

Like Liszt, Schumann was interested in the pedal-piano, which organists used (like the pedal-harpsichord) for home practice. He wrote three sets of pieces for the instrument: 6 *Studies in Canon Form*, Op. 56; 4 *Sketches*, Op. 58; and 6 *Fugues on the Notes BACH*, Op. 60. In 1903 Debussy arranged the Op. 56 set for two pianos, together with 'Am Springbrunnen' from the Piano

Duets, Op. 85. They all sound delightful on two pianos, and are specially welcome as they are much less difficult than the Variations, Op. 46.

Two other near-contemporaries, Frédéric Chopin (1810–49) and Franz Liszt (1811–86) each wrote two-piano versions of works that were originally piano solos. In 1828 the 18-year-old Chopin wrote to his friend Tytus Wotciechowski: 'In Sanniki I made a two piano version of the Rondo in C that you may remember.' The two-piano version appeared posthumously as Op. 73 in 1855; but the solo version, B. 26, was not published until as recently as 1954. When even younger, Chopin wrote a set of Variations in D, for piano duet, on the theme also used by Paganini in his *Le Carnaval de Venise*, Op. 10. Unfortunately the autograph lacks the first page of the secondo part and the last page of the primo, so the work is only available in a version completed by J. Ekier in 1965.

Liszt, an inveterate arranger of his own and other composers' music, published in 1866 a *Concerto pathétique*, S. 258, for two pianos (without orchestra), which is a revised version of his 1849 *Grosses Konzertsolo*, S. 176, for solo piano. Like the great Sonata in B minor, S. 178, its aim is to combine the separate elements of a full-blown sonata within a single structure, as Schubert did in his Fantasia in F minor, D. 940.

The outstanding 19th-century composer of both piano duets and two-piano music was Johannes Brahms (1833–97). At the age of 20 he was invited by the Hamburg publisher August Cranz to make some piano-duet arrangements of various popular melodies. One set of these, entitled *Souvenir de la Russie* was published under the pseudonym G. W. Marks, and has only recently (1994) been reissued in a modern edition. It consists of six not very characteristic 'fantasies' on Russian and Bohemian songs, technically efficient, but only very occasionally reminiscent of the mature Brahms. In an altogether different class are the Waltzes, Op. 39, and *Hungarian Dances*, WoO1, so well known in every sort of arrangement that it is often forgotten that they were originally written for piano duet. Even before these he had already published the touching *Variations in E flat on a Theme by Robert Schumann*, Op. 23 (not to be confused with the solo set with the same title, Op. 9), composed as a memorial to Schumann, who wrote the theme shortly before his death in an asylum in 1856. The Variations, which are far from easy

to play, end with a funeral march (not so-named), and are dedicated to Schumann's daughter Julie, with whom Brahms was at one time thought to have been in love.

Very different in mood are the sixteen Waltzes, Op. 39. Typically Viennese, they were written in 1865 and first published as piano duets a year later. A year after that, Brahms's own solo piano and simplified piano versions appeared; and much later—shortly before his death in 1897—he agreed to the publication of a two-piano arrangement of five of the set (Nos. 1, 2, 11, 14, and 15), which he had earlier made 'especially for two young beauties' (the Vrabély sisters).

The *Hungarian Dances* were originally issued in four books: Nos. I and II—which long remained Brahms's most popular works—were written in 1868–9, and Nos. III and IV in 1880. It is significant that in the original editions they were described as being 'arranged by [gesetzt von] Johannes Brahms', not 'composed by [komponiert von] him, thus implying that the melodies were not his own. Yet in 1888 Brahms wrote to his publisher Simrock, 'Many of them are entirely my own compositions.'

In addition to Op. 39 there are two further sets of waltzes: the eighteen *Liebeslieder*, Op. 52 (1868–9), and the fourteen *Neue Liebeslieder*, Op. 65 (1874). Both consist of settings of poems by Georg Friederich Daumer, plus (in Op. 65) an epilogue by Goethe. They were originally written for vocal quartet (S.A.T.B.) with piano-duet accompaniment, but Brahms also issued a version for piano duet without voices, as Op. 52a and Op. 65a.

Less well known are Brahms's piano-duet arrangements of 16 of Schubert's 17 *Ländler*, D. 366. He probably wrote them in 1865, at the same time as his own Waltzes, Op. 39. They long remained unpublished, though he himself arranged for a manuscript copy to be made and given to another of Schumann's daughters, Elise.

The two Brahms works for two pianos also exist in parallel versions. The Sonata in F minor, Op. 34bis, began life in 1862 as a string quintet (with two cellos), which he later destroyed. It then became this sonata, which he and Clara Schumann played to the dedicatee, Landgräfin Anna of Hesse, in the summer of 1864. Finally the work reached its most familiar form, the Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34, published simultaneously with the Sonata

version in 1865. The Piano Quintet is the more satisfactory of the two, though the Sonata sounds very well apart from the introduction to the Finale, which ideally requires the sustaining power of strings.

The second work, the *Variations on a Theme by Joseph Haydn*, Op. 56b, was initially written in 1873 for two pianos, and sounds magnificent in that form. When Brahms sent the manuscript to his publisher, however, he wrote, 'They are really orchestral variations . . . but this two piano version should not be thought of as an arrangement.' The orchestral version, Op. 56a, was duly published a year later, and has remained one of Brahms's most popular works. The theme of the Variations is the so-called 'Chorale St Antoni' from the *Feldpartita* in B flat, Hob. II/46, for two oboes, three bassoons, serpent, and two horns. Brahms used the same scoring for the theme, but omitted one bassoon and substituted a double bassoon for the obsolete serpent. It is now thought that the 'Chorale St Antoni' is not by Haydn, but was merely adapted by him from a popular work of the period.

As with Schubert's *Grand Duo*, many of the piano duets of Antonin Dvořák (1841–1904) suggest the orchestra, so it is not surprising that he eventually scored most of them. In spite of this, they contain such delightful music that they are irresistible for duettists. The best known are the *Slavonic Dances*, Op. 46, and the *New Slavonic Dances*, Op. 72, each set containing eight movements. Like some of Brahms's *Hungarian Dances*, they are not based on popular melodies, though they use various Czech dance-forms such as the furiant and polka.

Less well known but equally attractive are the *Ten Legends*, Op. 59/I and II. And though the six pieces entitled *From the Bohemian Forest*, Op. 68/I and II, are more uneven, the central slow movement of each group—No. 2 'On the Dark Lake' and No. 5 'Restful Woods'—is outstandingly beautiful. Dvořák later orchestrated No. 5 for solo cello and orchestra, but exceptionally left the remaining movements unscored. Finally, there is an isolated Polonaise in E flat, without opus number and unlisted in the *New Grove*, but it is of little musical interest. Dvořák wrote no two-piano music.

There are two sets of piano duets by Edvard Grieg (1843–1907): the 4 *Norwegian Dances*, Op. 35, and 2 *Waltz Caprices*, Op. 37. Also published as

piano duets are his 2 *Symphonic Pieces*, Op. 14, though they were in fact originally written for orchestra.

The great pianist Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924) made many wholly individual piano arrangements of organ works by Bach, while his own monumental *Fantasia Contrapuntistica* (1912) is based on a number of Bach works and fragments. He should also be remembered, however, for his beautiful (and much easier) two-movement *Finnish Folksongs*, Op. 27, for piano duet; and for the fascinating Duettino Concertante for two pianos (1919), founded on the third movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto in F, K. 459.

MODERN

It may seem odd to start a discussion of the modern repertoire with a composer who lived entirely in the 19th century; but besides providing a link with the writers of romantic character-pieces, such as Schumann and Dvořák, Georges Bizet (1838–75) was virtually the 'father' of a long line of French composers who wrote piano duets and two-piano music during the 20th century. Bizet's enchanting suite, *Jeux d'enfants*, Op. 22 (1871), consists of a dozen pieces descriptive of children's games. Six of them are well known in an orchestral version, but the whole set is well worth playing in its original form. Like the charming *Dolly Suite*, Op. 56, by Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924), but unlike some works to be mentioned later, it is far from easy and is really meant to be played to children rather than by them. Fauré, like many of his contemporaries, was an ardent Wagnerian. He joined with his friend André Messager (1853–1929) in concocting a somewhat equivocal tribute to the Master entitled *Souvenirs of Bayreuth: Fantasia in the Form of a Quadrille on Favourite Themes from The Ring of the Nibelungs* (c.1888). Equally light-hearted *Souvenirs of Munich* (1885–6), on themes from *Tristan and Isolde*, were written as duets by Emmanuel Chabrier (1841–94).

The earliest piano duet of Claude Debussy (1862–1918) is the four-movement *Petite Suite* of 1889. Light in style, and not very comfortably written for four hands, it sounds more effective in the orchestration by Henri Büsser. Even less typical is the *Marche écossaise* of 1891. Surprisingly, it was commis-

sioned by a distinguished Scottish army officer, who, through an interpreter, invited Debussy to arrange and orchestrate a march traditionally associated with the ancient Earls of Ross. The result was originally entitled *Marche des anciens comtes de Ross, dédiée à leur descendant le général Meredith Reid*. Very different are the 6 *Épigraphes antiques* of 1914. They arose from a commission Debussy received in 1900 to compose twelve short pieces, scored for the unusual combination of two flutes, two harps, and celesta, to accompany the recitation of poems from *Les Chansons de Bilitis* by his friend Pierre Louÿs. The first performance took place in 1901; and thirteen years later Debussy used seven of the pieces as basis for the 6 *Épigraphes*. Unlike the early *Petite Suite*, they are beautifully written for four hands and contain some remarkable colour-effects.

Debussy's two-piano works extend over a similarly long period. The first, *Lindaraja* (1901), is one of his many evocations of Spain; while the last, the important three-movement suite *En blanc et noir* (1915), is a typical example of his late style. (The third movement is dedicated to Stravinsky, and the second to Lieutenant Jacques Charlot, killed during the 1914–18 War.) Besides these original compositions, Debussy himself arranged his orchestral *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* for two pianos, and Ravel made an arrangement of the slightly later three Nocturnes, of which the middle movement, 'Fêtes', is particularly effective.

It is hard to know how seriously to take Erik Satie (1866–1925). He was for some time a friend of both Debussy and Ravel, and remained a powerful influence on younger contemporaries; yet his music is a baffling mixture of the sensitive and the banal, liberally laced with childish jokeyness. There are three suites for piano duet: the 3 *Morceaux en forme de poire* (1903), which characteristically contains not three but seven movements ('A way of beginning; Continuation of the same; I, II and III; Furthermore; Again'); three *Aperçus désagréables* (1908); and four *En habit de cheval* (1911). The titles give an idea of his bizarre sense of humour, but not of the limpid beauty that is occasionally found in his music.

Though Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943) is so well known for his four piano concertos and solo piano music, his piano duets and two-piano works are less often heard. Yet they are all written with his customary

warmth and are very agreeable to play. The earliest of the piano duets is an isolated Romance in G (1893), without opus-number. Next come the Six Duets, Op. 11 (1894), the last of which, 'Slava' (Glory), is based on a famous Russian folktune, also used by Beethoven in his String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59 No. 2, Rimsky-Korsakov (*Chants nationaux russes*, Op. 24), Mussorgsky (*Boris Godunov*), and Stravinsky (*The Firebird*). The *Polka italienne* (1906) exists in two versions: one for normal piano duet, the other with the surprising addition of a trumpet obbligato. Two other oddities are for one piano six hands: a Waltz (1886) and a Romance (1900-1), the latter beginning with the same rocking, cross-rhythm theme that opens the slow movement of the Second Piano Concerto (1900-1). For two pianos there are two suites: No. 1, *Fantasia-tableaux*, Op. 5 (1893), and the better-known No. 2 (1900-1), Op. 17. Towards the end of his life Rachmaninov wrote the splendid *Symphonic Dances* for orchestra, Op. 45 (1940), which also exist in the composer's very effective version for two pianos.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) was an inveterate orchestrator of his own keyboard music. The four-movement *Rapsodie espagnole* (1907-8) began life as a piano duet—though the third movement, 'Habañera', had appeared even earlier as part of a two-piano suite, *Sites auriculaires* (1895-7) (see below). Next came the fairytale suite, *Ma mère l'oye* (1908-10), originally written as a piano duet for the young son and daughter of his friends Ida and Cipa Godebski. As they found it too difficult to play, the first performance was given by two slightly older children, aged 14 and 11. In 1911 Ravel orchestrated the work, and a year later turned it into a ballet, adding some extra music.

A little-known single movement, 'Fanfare' (1927), is the prelude to a multi-composer children's ballet, *L'Éventail de Jeanne*. Ravel's contribution was first published and performed as a piano duet; but it was orchestrated for a performance at the Paris Opéra in 1929. Even less familiar is the 15-bar *Frontispice* (1918), for five hands on two pianos. It was written and published as preface to a long poem, based on combat experience during the 1914-18 War, by the Basque poet Ricciatto Canudo. The first ten bars sound not unlike the opening of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps*, but their complex rhythms and harmonies finally give way to a slowly ascending sequence of

Ravelian chords, beginning quietly, getting louder and louder, and suddenly finishing *ppp*. Altogether a strange piece.

Ravel's less unconventional two-piano music began with the above-mentioned *Sites auriculaires* (1895-7), consisting of 'Habañera' and 'Entre cloches', of which the first became part of the *Rapsodie espagnole*. Surprisingly enough, the magnificent orchestral *poème chorégraphique*, *La Valse* (1919-20), was originally written for two pianos and first performed in that form in October 1920. It was not heard in its orchestral version until two months later.

Notable arrangements by Ravel are of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* for piano duet, and the [3] Nocturnes for two pianos, made in 1910 and 1911 respectively.

The earliest piano duet by Stravinsky (1882-1971), the colossus who overshadowed so much 20th-century music, was a version of his epoch-making ballet, *Le Sacre du printemps* (1913), written to accompany stage rehearsals of the ballet whenever its enormous orchestra was not present. It is immensely difficult, but is occasionally played in public by courageous pianists.

At the opposite end of the technical scale are two sets of piano duets that were meant to be played by either beginners or children. They are the 3 *Easy Pieces* (1915), with a simple secondo part, and the 5 *Easy Pieces* (1917), with a simple primo. The pieces in the first set are dedicated to Alfredo Casella, Erik Satie, and Serge Diaghilev respectively, the last of whom was expected to play no more than two alternating chords throughout. The second set was intended for the instruction and amusement of his two elder children.

Stravinsky's two works for two pianos are much later. The four-movement Concerto without orchestra, a forbiddingly virtuoso work of 1931-5, was written for performance with his 25-year-old son Soulima. The three-movement Sonata (1943-4) is altogether slighter, and well within the reach of enterprising amateurs.

* * *

For more recent composers it will be convenient to abandon strict chronology, and list some of them more briefly under their nationality or the types of music they composed. For example, works in which one part is simpler

than the other are discussed on pp. 91–2; and on pp. 92–5 a separate section is devoted to works involving other instruments, including the orchestra.

Charles Koechlin (1867–1951) carried on the French tradition of piano-duet writing with his 4 *Sonatinas françaises*, Op. 60 (1919). Each contains between three and five movements, often in contrapuntal textures, and none of them is excessively difficult to play. They have long been out of print, but should be made available again.

Koechlin's near-contemporary Florent Schmitt (1870–1958) (French in spite of his name) wrote eight suites for piano duet, comprising over fifty pieces. They range in difficulty from *Sur cinq notes*, Op. 34, with a primo part confined to the same five white notes throughout, to the more demanding *Reflets d'Allemagne*, Op. 28, containing eight waltzes named after different cities in Germany. He also published 3 *Rapsodies*, Op. 53, for two pianos.

Another writer of admirable piano duets was Paul Ladmirault (1877–1944), who was much influenced by the Celtic background of his native Brittany, and even of Scotland and Ireland. This is shown in his four suites, the three-movement *Musique rustique*, *Rapsodie gaëlique* (including setting of 'The Campbells are Coming', and a 'Limerick Pibroch'), *Suite bretonne*, and the delightful five-movement *Variations sur des airs de Biniou trécorois*. For two pianos he wrote a second *Suite bretonne* and the isolated *Brocéliande au Martin*.

Of the younger group known as Les Six (enthusiastically promoted by Jean Cocteau), the prolific Darius Milhaud produced only a single suite for piano duet, the three-movement *Enfantines* (1928). He wrote five suites for two pianos, however, including the ever-popular *Scaramouche*, Op. 165a. Its three movements are based, like much of his music, on dance-rhythms of South America, where for a time he served in the Diplomatic Corps. Two other members of Les Six, Georges Auric (1899–1983) and Francis Poulenc (1899–1963), also favoured two pianos rather than piano duets. Indeed, each (like Milhaud) only wrote a single duet work: Auric the 5 *Bagatelles* (1926), and Poulenc a somewhat rebarbative early Sonata (1918). There are attractive two-piano works by both, however, including Poulenc's sparkling Concerto (1932), later Sonata (1953), and Auric's *Partita* (1953–5).

Altogether more difficult are the works for two pianos by Olivier

Messiaen (1908–92) and Pierre Boulez (b. 1925). Messiaen's *Visions de l'Amen* (1943) is a 45-minute work in a single movement, combining his usual strange mixture of lush harmonies and religiosity. It demands a virtuoso technique, as do the *Structures*, Books I (1952) and II (1956–61) of Boulez, whose rhythmic and technical complexities are only manageable by skilled and devoted players.

The two-piano works of György Ligeti (b. 1923) and Luciano Berio (b. 1925) are almost equally demanding. According to one authority, Ligeti's triptych *Monument—Self-Portrait—Movement* (1976), 'attempted to make the music appear three-dimensional, like a hologram suspended in imaginary space, through the differentiation of dynamic planes'. Berio's less esoteric two-piano works are listed on p. 50.

More within the reach of the keen amateur are the two sonatas by Paul Hindemith (1895–1963), the earlier for piano duet (1938) and the later for two pianos (1942). A brilliant (though far from easy) concert-work from the same period is the set of *Variations on a Theme by Paganini* (1941) for two pianos by Witold Lutosławski (b. 1913). The theme is the same as that used by Brahms in his Variations, Op. 35, for solo piano, and by Rachmaninov in his Rhapsody, Op. 43, for piano and orchestra.

American composers have also helped to extend the repertoire. The two best known in Europe are Aaron Copland (1900–90), and Samuel Barber (1910–81). Copland's *Danzón cubano* (1942) for two pianos is as effective in its slighter way as the brilliant orchestral *El salón México*; while Barber's six-movement *Souvenirs*, Op. 28, for piano duet are well within the reach of amateurs. Works by some dozen other American composers, ranging in date from Wallingford Riegger (1885–1961) to George Crumb (b. 1970), are listed in Chapter III; while the Concertos for piano duet by Vincent Persichetti (1915–87) and Andrew Imbrie (b. 1921) will be found on p. 92.

Though Percy Grainger (1882–1961) was Australian, he may be conveniently included at this point by way of a 'lead-in' to British composers. He was not only extremely prolific, but had a fondness for issuing exactly the same work in several different guises—he called it 'elastic scoring'—without indicating which was the original. For example, his setting of the folksong 'Molly on the Shore' was published for wind band in 1918, for piano solo in

1918, and for two pianos in 1947; but the last was not said to be an arrangement of the first. When confronted by such puzzles, all one can say is that his works listed in Chapter 3, whether for piano duet (4 and 6 hands!) or two pianos (4, 6, and 8 hands), sound splendid and are enormous fun to play. Some are arrangements and some are not, and some are settings of folksongs and some are original works.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958), the outstanding English composer of the period, and Arnold Bax (1883–1953) came slightly earlier. The piano was not Vaughan Williams's favourite instrument and he used it rarely, except in later works as part of the orchestra. Nevertheless he wrote two works for two pianos for the husband-and-wife team, Cyril Smith and Phyllis Sellick: the formidable *Introduction and Fugue* (1946), which sounds as though it might be an off-shoot of the craggy 4th Symphony of the 1930s, and the Concerto (also 1946) whose strange history is recounted in *Some Works with Orchestra* (p. 94, below). Bax, who was himself an accomplished pianist, wrote half a dozen works for two pianos. They range from the pseudo-Celtic *Moy Mell* (1917), dedicated to 'Miss Irene Scharrer and Miss Myra Hess' (former fellow-students at the Royal Academy of Music) to an isolated piece entitled *Red Autumn* (1931). All are beautifully written for the instruments and grateful to play.

When Cyril Smith lost the use of his left hand as the result of a thrombosis, he and his wife performed a number of works specially written for them for two pianos, three hands. Among these were arrangements by Arthur Bliss (1891–1975) of two of his earlier compositions: see *Some Works with Orchestra* (p. 94, below).

Four composers often grouped in pairs, at least by journalists, were William Walton (1902–83), coupled with Constant Lambert (1905–51), and Lennox Berkeley (1903–89) with Benjamin Britten (1913–76). Walton's delightful *Duets for Children* (1940) were originally written as piano duets for his nephew and niece and orchestrated in the same year as *Music for Children*. (They were not arranged by Herbert Murrell, as stated by one writer probably misled by the fact that Murrell made a duet arrangement of Walton's 1st Symphony.) Lambert wrote only a single work for the medium: the *3 Pièces nêgres sur les touches blanches* (1949). Like much of his music, the three pieces

are influenced by jazz; and though confined to the white keys, they are far from easy to play.

Both Berkeley and Britten were more generous in their contributions to the repertoire. For piano duet, Berkeley wrote a *Sonatina*, Op. 39, and the *Theme and Variations*, Op. 73; while Britten gave duettists an essential role in his children's cantata *St Nicholas*, Op. 42 (1948), and the two miniature operas *The Little Sweep*, Op. 45 (1949), and *Noye's Fludde*, Op. 59 (1957). There are also the 15-minute *Gemini Variations*, Op. 73 (1964), written for the 12-year-old Jeney twins Zoltán and Gábor, whom Britten had met in Budapest the year before. As one of them played violin and piano, and the other flute and piano, the work makes use of various permutations of all three instruments, ending up with a Fugue for flute, violin, and piano duet, which (as Britten wrote) involves 'quite a bit of stage managing'. Each wrote three works for two pianos: Berkeley, the *3 Pieces*, Op. 3, a *Sonatina*, Op. 52 No. 2, and the Concerto, Op. 30, with Orchestra; Britten, an *Introduction and Rondo alla Burlesca* and *Mazurka Elegiaca*, Op. 23 Nos. 1 and 2 (the latter dedicated to the memory of Paderewski), and the *Scottish Ballad*, Op. 28, with orchestra.

The final composer to be mentioned in this section is Malcolm Arnold (b. 1921), who wrote two works for particular performers: the Concerto for piano duet and strings, Op. 32, for Paul Hamburger and Helen Pyke; and the Concerto for two pianos, three hands, Op. 104, not an arrangement (like the Bliss work) but specially composed for Cyril Smith and Phyllis Sellick.

Many piano duets and two-piano works not included in the above survey will be found in Chapter 3, under the composer's name in the Alphabetical List, or in the sections *Some Works for Master and Pupil*, and *Some Works with Other Instruments*, including Orchestra.

2 Technique

PIANO DUETS

Preliminaries

When two people first play duets together each invariably accuses the other of taking up too much room. Their complaints echo down the years from as far back as 1777, when Dr Charles Burney wrote in the preface to his pioneering *Four Sonatas or Duets for Two Performers on One Pianoforte or Harpsichord*: 'Though, at first, the near approach of the hands of the performers may seem awkward and embarrassing, a little use and contrivance with regard to the manner of placing them, and the choice of fingers, will soon remove that difficulty.' Burney might also have mentioned the position of their seats. For if these are placed at a very slight angle to one another—the wider space at the back—instead of exactly parallel, duettists will find that they have an unexpected amount of space for their inconveniently neighbouring elbows.

Another perennial dispute concerns the use of the pedals. Should they be operated by primo or secondo? The answer becomes clear as soon as it is remembered that pedalling is to a large extent conditioned by harmony, and that harmonic changes are most easily observed from the bass. It therefore follows that the pedals should be controlled by the player of the bass, i.e. secondo. Moreover, this is advisable even during primo's solo passages, for a temporary change-over could only cause confusion.

Less often discussed is the important question of page-turning. It might be thought the task could best be carried out by a third person, if one happens to be available, but this is not so. Bitter experience shows that he either gets in the way, turns two pages at once, or pulls the copy on to the keys.