

THE PERIODICAL OVERTURE IN 8 PARTS VII

JOHANN STAMITZ

Published by Robert Bremner at the Harp and Hautboy, opposite Somerset-House, in the Strand

Issued: 2 January 1764; price 2 shillings

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Editors: Barnaby Priest & Alyson McLamore



COMMENTARY

Robert Bremner (c.1717–1789) had followed the lead of French printers when he introduced the “periodical” symphonic publication scheme to England in 1763, and he also adopted the six-item groupings that were the practice of many Continental publishers. When the sixth *Periodical Overture* had been published, in December 1763, Bremner offered a “general Title” (a composite cover sheet) for those who had purchased the full set of six works.¹ More significantly, he embarked on a second grouping a month later, in January 1764, indicating that sales had been strong enough to warrant continuing the venture.

To launch the second “opera,” Bremner turned again to a composer he had featured twice already: the celebrated Johann Stamitz (1717–1757). In fact, one of Stamitz’s symphonies had just brought Bremner’s first “opera” to a close. Bremner left no business records, but it is tempting to think that the two earlier Stamitz works had sold particularly well, especially since Bremner would go on to publish a total of four Stamitz symphonies within the second set of six *Periodical Overtures*.



Another persistent mystery in the Bremner series is how he came by the sources that he used for his London prints. The Stamitz symphony in E-flat that was the basis for *Periodical Overture No. 7* appeared in the same two continental publications containing the D major symphony that served as *Periodical Overture No. 3*: the E-flat overture was Number 4 of six symphonies in a 1758 “Opus 4” print from “Huberti” (Anton Huberty) in Paris, while it was Number 2 of a 1763 Amsterdam publication issued by Johann Julius Hummel, also devoted to six Stamitz symphonies.² As with *Periodical Overture No. 3*, it seems probable that the Parisian version served as Bremner’s model, since he retained the wavy lines (indicating vibrato) that are present in Huberty’s edition and are absent in Hummel’s. Unlike the two previous symphonies by Stamitz that had appeared in the *Periodical* series, Bremner chose this time to retain the minuet movement, making this the first four-movement work to be published as a *Periodical Overture* in Bremner’s series.

The prevalence of works by Stamitz probably reflects the taste for Mannheim-style music that Bremner perceived in his customers, even though Stamitz himself had been deceased almost seven years by the time of *Periodical Overture No. 7*’s publication. Stamitz had moved to Mannheim from his native Bohemia around 1741, joining the court ensemble as a violinist. On the last day of 1742, Elector Carl Philipp died, and his successor, Carl Theodor, proved to be a generous patron of the arts. Within three years, Stamitz was earning 900 gulden, making him the highest-paid instrumentalist in the Mannheim court, and in 1750, a new post was created for him: “Director of Instrumental Music.”³

¹ *The Public Advertiser*, 1 December 1763, p. 3.

² The British Library, h.2785.rr (4/4); [https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Symphonies_\(Stamitz,_Johann\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Symphonies_(Stamitz,_Johann)).

³ Eugene K. Wolf, “Johann Stamitz,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), Vol. 24: 265.

The international reputation of the Mannheim orchestra soon soared, celebrated for its precision and exciting dynamic effects. Even after Stamitz's death, the ensemble maintained its stellar reputation for decades. In 1772, Charles Burney famously described the ensemble as "an army of generals, equally fit to plan a battle, as to fight it," since its membership included "more solo players and good composers . . . than perhaps in any other orchestra in Europe."⁴ Indeed, several other members of the ensemble were represented in Bremner's series, and some of them had been Stamitz's former composition students, such as Christian Cannabich (1731–1798), Anton Fils (1733–1760), and Ignaz Fränzl (1736–1811).⁵

M U S I C

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To be continued Monthly, No. 7, of

T H E P E R I O D I C A L O E V R T U R E .

Composed by signor J. STAMITZ.

Printed by A. C. Bremner, opposite to Somerset House
in the Strand.

Where may be had, lately published,
Six Trios composed by Sig. G. Pugnani, Price 5s.

Even with four movements, *Periodical Overture No. 7* was considerably shorter than the preceding *No. 6*, and thus Bremner returned to his normal charge of two shillings, a price level he would sustain for quite some time. The widespread survival of the symphony in archives today is evidence that it certainly had its customers; *WorldCat* and *RISM* list copies in England, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic, and the United States.⁶ It also stayed in the repertory for a

long while, judging from the records of the Edinburgh Musical Society. They performed the seventh overture in 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, and 1778; it was played twice in 1780, 1781, and 1782; and audiences heard it a whopping five times in 1783, with one more performance to come in 1785, more than twenty years after it was first issued.⁷ A surviving copy of the post-1789 print by John Preston (d. 1798), who acquired Bremner's plates and reissued the entire series after Bremner's death, is held by the National Museum in Prague.⁸

As had been true in the preceding overture in Bremner's series, Stamitz used the key of E-flat major throughout *Periodical Overture No. 7*, and all of the movements—apart from the minuet-and-trio—are in what James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy have called a "Type 2 Sonata" form (||: a/I b/V :||: a/V b/I :||).⁹ However, the opening "Allegro" differs from the others by omitting the repetitions that clarify the binary structure. Its opening theme in quadruple-meter is actually dependent on both the violins and the winds; the former play short bursts of eighth notes, separated by rests and emphasized with dynamic contrasts, while the winds play more sustained notes in a syncopated rhythm. The partnership of the first measure is repeated a third higher in the second bar, and this sequential motif becomes a cyclic element throughout the symphony: every movement opens with an upward sequence, most often featuring a rising third. Sudden dynamic contrasts—a Mannheim characteristic—also pervade the entire work.

In the rather brief first movement (only seventy-six measures), Stamitz makes use of many other recognizable "Mannheim" devices, such as "drum 8ths" (i.e., m. 1), measured tremolos (m. 7), and the quick rising-and-falling motif known as the *Bebung* (m. 41).¹⁰ His own propensity to give special attention to the wind instruments is apparent in the second theme (m. 13), which is presented by the oboes playing in parallel thirds.



The leisurely "Andante," in cut-time, opens with an upward leap and a descending cascade, along with the sequential repetition that characterizes *Periodical Overture No. 7*. It also features two uses of a *rinforzando* indication in its first two full measures, reflecting Stamitz's increasing interest in dynamic levels beyond *piano*

⁴ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, The Netherlands, and United Provinces* (London: T. Beckett, 1775), 1:93.

⁵ Wolf, "Johann Stamitz," 265.

⁶ <https://search.worldcat.org/title/1050808794>; <https://rism.online/sources/990060927>.

⁷ Jenny Burchell, *Polite or Commercial Concerts?: Concert Management and Orchestral Repertoire in Edinburgh, Bath, Oxford, Manchester, and Newcastle, 1730–1799*, Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities, ed. by John Caldwell (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 310–345 *passim*.

⁸ Václav Jan Sýkora, *Musical Antiqua Bohemica* 16, Supraphon Sua 19148, [6].

⁹ James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 353–4.

¹⁰ Hugo Riemann, ed., *Sinfonien der pfälzbayerischen Schule (Mannheimer Symphoniker)*, in Year 7, Vol. II, of *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern*, in Series 2 of *Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1906), xvii.

and *forte*, and thereby leading historian Eugene K. Wolf to classify this work as belonging to the middle of Stamitz's output, probably dating from the early 1750s.¹¹

Even though Bremner retained Stamitz's minuet movement in *Periodical Overture 7*, he diverged from his possible continental sources in two ways. First, he labeled the second of the rounded-binary structures as a "2d Minuet," rather than using the "Trio" designation found in both Huberty's and Hummel's prints. Second, at the end of that second, quieter minuet, he failed to include any indication to take the customary "da capo al Men[uetto]" (as shown in the Hummel score) or "Al 1^o [Primo]" (as indicated by Huberty). Perhaps Bremner assumed that ensembles would be familiar with the expected repetition scheme from their knowledge of the dance itself, even though it had not yet figured very frequently as a movement in British symphonies.

Bremner diverged again from Huberty and Hummel in the tempo designation for the finale: the two continental publishers both called it "Presto," while Bremner labels it "Allegro." Probably unwittingly, he thereby reinforced Wolf's view that this compound-duple finale differed from many of Stamitz's middle-period works by being "somewhat slower and more dance-like," and its opening triadic melody certainly has a folk-dance quality.¹² Stamitz continues to showcase the oboes in multiple *solis* passages, starting in measure 13 when they present the second theme. This toe-tapping finale brings the symphony to a very satisfying conclusion and underscores why Stamitz enjoyed such long-standing popularity in the eighteenth century.

EDITORIAL METHODS

Transposing instruments: Transposing instruments are written in conventional modern format indicating original key—parts in original keys are available [e.g., Horn I in F (orig. in D)].

Slurs and ties: Editorial slurs are indicated using dotted lines; editorial ties are indicated by brackets.

Triplet/rhythmic grouping indications: In general, modern practice is followed. Occasionally (especially in slow movements), original subdivisions are used. Where groupings are inconsistently realized in the original source material, modern groupings are adopted.

Grace notes and appoggiaturas: These are generally treated as appoggiaturas and are given a value of half the note they precede; in cases where it seems clear that grace notes are intended in the original, a slash is added.

Alternate notes/ossia passages, etc.: When a written note is unplayable, an alternative octave substitution is indicated in smaller font and within brackets.

Accents/articulations/fermatas: There is considerable inconsistency in articulation throughout the set of periodical overtures. Following the Bremner edition, a wedge is used rather than a staccato mark. In some cases, the printed edition uses wedges and staccato markings within a movement (usually the slow central movement). When this is the case, both marks have been used. Where parallel passages indicate the use of articulations, these have been included between brackets.

Dynamic markings: In the original edition, the placement of dynamic marks can be inconsistent within the bar and sometimes across the barline. Where the correct placement of the dynamic is clear from the musical phrasing, the dynamics have been repositioned without comment. Where dynamics are less clear, or missing, the editor's dynamics occur within square brackets.

Crescendo / diminuendo markings: "Cresc." and "dim." markings are generally used, but there are rare exceptions to this with the use of hairpins. Where these are editorial, they are enclosed in square brackets. Other markings such as *rinf.* have been retained except where it seems clear that this refers to a crescendo.

Realization of notational shorthand: For spacing reasons, some use of notational short-hand has been used. When this is the case, the first full beat has been written out.

Altered note values: In the sources, there are occasional errors and inconsistencies in note values. Where these occur, the altered note values are given within brackets.

Accidentals: As is standard modern practice, accidentals remain valid until the next barline. This differs from

¹¹ Eugene K. Wolf, *The Symphonies of Johann Stamitz: A Study in the Formation of the Classic Style* (Utrecht: Bohn, Scheltema & Holkema, 1981), 239.

¹² Wolf, *The Symphonies of Johann Stamitz*, 226.

eighteenth-century practice where this convention was not consistently employed. Wherever this is the case, accidentals are added in brackets.

Figured bass: Although the eighteenth-century parts usually position the figured bass numerals above the relevant bass notes, the modern score and parts show them below the basso line.

Missing music: Where music is missing in the original, alternative sources are sought (e.g., when a bar is missing due to a printer's error or when music is unreadable). When eighteenth-century concordances are unobtainable, editorial notes are added in smaller font within brackets.

CRITICAL NOTES

The notation of dynamics and articulation has been standardized throughout. Where these are missing in the original source, they have been reconstructed from parallel passages. These are indicated by the use of dotted slurs and brackets. Where there is inconsistency in the use of staccato articulation marks, the editors have taken decisions based on the collocation of the markings. As is common with music printed in this period, *appoggiature* are inconsistently notated. These have been standardized. Copyist errors have been corrected in brackets (see notes below), along with errors in accidentals. The horn parts have been transposed into F in the score. Metronome marks are a suggestion for performance only. Rehearsal letters, cues in parts, and bar numbers have been added for convenience.

Mvt. 1	Allegro	
m. 26	Hn 1, Hn 2	3rd beat quarter note changed to C5
m. 44	Vn 2	1st beat changed to Eb4 quarter note (parallel with Violin 1)
m. 57	Vn 1	1st beat changed to quarter note (parallel passage with m. 59)
m. 74	Ob 1, Ob 2	2nd beat changed to A#4 (unison with Violin 1)
Mvt. 2	Andante	
m. 10	Basso	2nd beat changed to quarter note G3, 3rd beat changed to A#3 (parallel passage in m. 8)
m. 14	Vn 1	appoggiatura on 1st beat added (Bb4) in parallel with Violin 2
mm. 16, 59	Vn 2, VA	first beat changed to dotted half note (parallel with Violin 1)
m. 43	Vn 1, Vn 2	final eighth note changed to Eb5 (mirror passage in m. 44)
m. 66	Vn 2	appoggiatura on 2nd beat changed to sixteenth note (parallel with Violin 1)
m. 67	VA	1st beat changed to dotted half note (parallel with Violin 1)
Mvt. 3	Minuetto & Trio	
m. 4	Ob 1	appoggiatura C5 added to first beat (parallel with Violin 1)
m. 23	Ob 1, Ob 2	appoggiatura C5 added to first beat (unison with Violin 1)
m. 23	Vn 2	appoggiatura A#4 added to first beat (parallel with Violin 1)
m. 35	Vn 2	appoggiatura F4 added to first beat (unison with Violin 1)
m. 39	Vn 1	first three eighth notes changed to G5, F5, Eb5 (parallel with Violin 1 m. 54)
m. 43	Ob 1	appoggiatura Eb4 added to first beat (parallel with Violin 2)
m. 43, 54	Ob 2	appoggiatura G4 added to first beat (parallel with Violin 1)
m. 50	Vn 1, Vn 2	rhythm changed to match Oboe 1 and Oboe 2
m. 54	Ob 1	appoggiatura E4 added to 1st beat (parallel with Violin 2)
m. 56	Ob 1	appoggiatura B4 added to 1st beat (parallel with Violin 1)
mm. 58, 59	Ob 1, Vn 2	appoggiatura D4 added to 1st beat (parallel with Violin 1)
mm. 58, 59	Ob 2	appoggiatura F4 added to 1st beat (parallel with Violin 1)
Mvt. 4	Allegro	
m. 16	Vn 1, Vn 2, VA, Basso	1st beat reduced to dotted quarter note (matching oboes and horns)
m. 74	Vn 2	final eighth note changed to D#5 (parallel with Violin 1)
mm. 112, 118	Ob 2	inverted mordent on 2nd beat changed to trill (parallel with strings)

CATALOGUE REFERENCES

- RISM A/I S/SS 4598 [Répertoire International des Sources Musicales;
<https://rism.online/sources/990060927>]
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- Dürrenmatt No. 22 [Hans-Rudolf Dürrenmatt, *Die Durchführung bei Johann Stamitz (1717–1757): Beiträge zum Problem der Durchführung und analytische Untersuchung von ersten Sinfoniesätzen*, Serie II, Vol. 19 of Publikationen der schweizerischen musikforschenden Gesellschaft (Bern, SZ: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1969)]
- GZ 54 [Peter Gradenwitz, *Die Werke*, Teil II of *Johann Stamitz: Leben—Umwelt—Werke*, Taschenbücher zur Musikwissenschaft, vol. 94 (Wilhelmshaven, Germany: Heinrichshofen's Verlag, 1984)]
- LaRue 11268 (S789) [Jan LaRue, *A Catalogue of 18th-Century Symphonies*, Volume I: Thematic Identifier (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988)]
- Wolf Eb-4 [Eugene K. Wolf, *The Symphonies of Johann Stamitz: A Study in the Formation of the Classic Style* (Utrecht: Bohn, Scheltema & Holkema, 1981)]

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Stamitz portrait: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann_Stamitz.jpg (public domain in its source country on January 1, 1996, and in the United States).
- Publication announcement: *The Public Advertiser*, 2 January 1764, p. 3 (courtesy of the British Library Archives)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ESSAY

<https://repertoire-explorer.musikmph.de/en/periodical-overtures-details/>



PERFORMANCE MATERIALS

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