

THE PERIODICAL OVERTURE IN 8 PARTS XI

JOHANN STAMITZ

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

Issued: 15 May 1764; price 2 shillings

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COMMENTARY

Although many—if not most—of the works in the *Periodical Overtures* are little known today, some have enjoyed sustained attention over the centuries since their composition, and that is certainly true for *Periodical Overture No. 11* by Johann Stamitz (1717–1757). By the time publisher Robert Bremner (c.1713–1789) selected it for inclusion in the series, Stamitz’s E-flat major symphony had already been issued in a well-received 1758 Parisian collection of *VI Sinfonie* (by various authors) subtitled “La Melodia Germanica.”¹ Five years later, in 1763, J. J. Hummel printed it in Amsterdam as the final item in a set of six symphonies entirely by Stamitz.² However, Bremner’s 1764 publication was the first English edition of the piece, and thus he upheld his vow from the start of the series that “No Simphonie, &c. shall be published, that may have formerly been printed in Britain.”³



Periodical Overture No. 11 marked the fifth time that a work by Stamitz was published in Bremner’s series, which was a clear indication of the continuing admiration for the late composer. 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.”⁴

The international reputation of the Mannheim orchestra soon soared, celebrated for its precision and exciting dynamic effects. Stamitz also enhanced his personal standing by making two successful trips to Paris in the 1750s.⁵ Even after Stamitz’s death, the ensemble maintained its stellar reputation for decades. In 1772, Charles Burney famously described the orchestra 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.”⁶ Indeed, two other members of the ensemble had already been represented in Bremner’s series, among them Stamitz’s former composition students Christian Cannabich (1731–1798; *Periodical Overture No. 10*) and Anton Fils (1733–1760; *Periodical Overtures No. 4 and No. 8*).⁷

¹ [https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Symphonies_%27La_Melodia_Germanica%27%2C_Op.11_\(Various\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Symphonies_%27La_Melodia_Germanica%27%2C_Op.11_(Various)).

² [https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Symphonies_\(Stamitz,_Johann\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/6_Symphonies_(Stamitz,_Johann)).

³ *The St. James’s Chronicle; or, The British Evening-Post*, Saturday, 25 June, to Tuesday, 28 June, 1763, p. 2.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Wolf, “Johann Stamitz,” 265.

⁶ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, The Netherlands, and the United Provinces*, 2nd ed., corrected (London: T. Beckett, J. Rosson, and G. Robinson, 1775), I:95.

⁷ Wolf, “Johann Stamitz,” 265.

N E W M U S I C.
This Day was published,
 Number II. of

THE Periodical Overture, composed by
 Sig. Stamitz, Price 2s.
 A second Set of Violin Trios, by Sig. Zanetti, 5s.
 The favourite Songs now sung at Ranelagh, 6d.
 The favourite Songs in the Operas Leucippo and Zencrita, for the Voice and Harpsichord, 2s. 6d.
 Printed for R. Bremner, opposite Somerset-House, in the Strand.

Of whom may be had,

The favourite Songs in the Opera Cleonice, for the Voice and Harpsichord, 2s. 6d.
 Instrumental Parts to ditto, 5s.
 The favourite Songs in the Opera Siroe, 2s.
 Instrumental Parts to ditto, 4s.

As had been the case with three of the previous Stamitz works published as *Periodical Overtures*, Bremner again dropped the minuet movement from his version of this symphony. Moreover, he designated the woodwind parts as being solely for oboes, despite the mixed signals in the preceding continental prints, which had mentioned “clarinettes” and flutes as alternatives. Bremner thereby adapted the work to the preferences of his British customers, and the success of his approach can be seen in documented references to the work for decades. Surviving records from the Edinburgh Musical Society show that it was played once a year in 1768, 1769, 1780, 1781, 1785, and 1786, and it was performed twice in 1770.⁸ Moreover, more than twenty-five years after Bremner’s

publication, a “Mr. Hartley” adapted the symphony for the harpsichord, which London publisher John Bland (c.1750–c.1840) issued in 1791 as *The Favorite Periodical Overture, No. 11*.⁹

Later generations continued to admire *Periodical Overture No. 11*. In 1826, a correspondent (using the pseudonym “Senex”) wrote to *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* in response to a previous issue’s article “The Great Symphonists.” He listed a number of mid-eighteenth-century symphonists whom he felt had been unjustly ignored. He credited Stamitz with introducing the *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, and pointed to *Periodical Overture No. 11* as possessing “beautiful specimens” of the *crescendo* in its first and last movements.¹⁰ Then, in 1980—two centuries after the symphony’s heyday—Claude V. Palisca published Stamitz’s first movement in the inaugural edition of the *Norton Anthology of Western Music*.¹¹ He based his score on the venerable *Denkmäler Deutscher Tonkunst* edition from 1902.¹² That selection has therefore given generations of collegiate music students an introduction to characteristic “Mannheim” features in this vigorous opening; it also make the first movement of Bremner’s edition seem like a familiar friend.

One of the memorable gestures of *Periodical Overture No. 11* is the use of three sharp “hammer-blow” strokes, or *premier coups d’archet*, that immediately grab listeners’ attention.¹³ This “Allegro assai” is structured as a quadruple-meter sonata form without repetitions (characteristic of Stamitz’s later symphonies), and the first theme is underpinned by measured tremolos in the second violins and violas and by “drum 8ths” in the “Basso” part.¹⁴ Distinctive horn calls resound in the second half of the theme (m. 11), and one of the transition’s most exciting elements is the use of Mannheim crescendos, which begin building in measure 18 and again in measure 27. The oboes are showcased in the more lyrical second theme (m. 47), which also plays with antiphonal effects between sections of the orchestra. After the modulatory development (m. 75), the recapitulation reverses the order of the themes, with the lyrical oboes reappearing in measure 108, the horn calls in measure 132, and the hammer-blows in measure 139 for a resounding conclusion.

The “Andantino” shifts to the dominant key of B-flat major, and it employs a binary-sonata pattern that James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy call a “Type 2 Sonata,” diagrammed as an ||: a/I b/V :: a/V b/I ::||

⁸ 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), 310–348 *passim*.

⁹ Eugene K. Wolf, *The Symphonies of Johann Stamitz: A Study in the Formation of the Classic Style* (Utrecht: Bohn, Scheltema & Holkema, 1981), 426.

¹⁰ Senex, “To the Editor,” *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* 8, no. 31 (July 1826): 304–5.

¹¹ Johann Anton Wenzel Stamitz, “Sinfonia a 8 in E-flat Major (La Melodia Germanica No. 3), in *Classic • Romantic • Modern*, 42–50, Vol. II of *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, ed. Claude V. Palisca (New York: W. W. Norton, 1980); it continues to appear in the 2019 eighth edition.

¹² Hugo Riemann, ed., *Sinfonien der pfälzbayerischen Schule (Mannheimer Symphoniker)*, Jahrgang III, vol. 1 of *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern* (Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst, Zweite Folge), ed. Adam Sandbergern (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1902), 1–28.

¹³ David D. Boyden and Peter Walls, “Coup d’archet,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), Vol. 6: 579.

¹⁴ Wolf, *The Symphonies of Johann Stamitz*, 340.

structure.¹⁵ This simple-duple movement is scored for strings only, and its first theme has a lovely lilting quality above softly pulsing drum 8ths. The second theme (m. 30) features both the bass and viola parts in rising and falling scalar patterns, followed by the violins in a more disjunct and syncopated line (m. 40). Like many Mannheim works, sudden dynamic contrasts are often separated by only a single measure, and the latter half of the movement is peppered with *rinforzandi* accentuations.

The “Prestissimo,” an exhilarating finale in 3/8, is again loaded with strategies that the Mannheim orchestra made famous. Its first theme comprises an upward sequence that employs the quick rising-and-falling motif known as the *Bebung*, while the bass strings accompany with steady drum 8ths.¹⁶ The sequence gradually crescendos to bell-like chords played *fortissimo* by the whole ensemble (m. 17) while the upper strings now play measured tremolos. The chords are quickly followed by lively hunting-style fanfares for the winds and upper strings. The sonata form’s second theme (m. 47) again starts quietly; the second violins and violas play oscillating, conjunct lines underneath measured tremolos, with the oboes joining in on the second half of each phrase. The extremely brief development (m. 95) plays with a modulatory *Bebung* before stabilizing in E-flat at measure 103 for the recapitulation of the first theme. The second theme makes its own return in measure 149. A series of seven hammer-blow E-flat chords in the last three bars bring the movement (and symphony) to a satisfying, table-thumping close.



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

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

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, *appoggiatura* 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. 30	VA	2nd beat changed to A \natural 4 (continuity of harmony from previous measure)
m. 30	Basso	2nd beat changed to A \natural 3 (continuity of harmony from previous measure)
m. 34	Basso	first eighth note of 2nd beat change to A \natural 3 (octave unison with VA)
Mvt. 2	Andante	
m. 24	Vn 2	2nd beat, sixteenth note changed to G5; 3rd beat, sixteenth notes changed to F4 and E \sharp 4 (parallel thirds with Violin 1)
m. 34	Vn 1	4th beat, final sixteenth note changed to B \flat 4 (parallel with figuration in m. 35)
m. 44	Basso	second eighth note changed to E \sharp 3 (parallel with m. 43)
m. 69	Vn 2	appoggiatura G4 added to 1st beat (parallel thirds with Violin 1)
m. 78	Vn 1	4th beat, final sixteenth note changed to C \sharp 5 (parallel with previous figuration)
Mvt. 3	Presto	
m. 20	VA	1st beat changed to G4 (parallel with Basso)
mm. 38, 70	Hn 1	1st beat changed to E \sharp 5 (copyist error corrected)
m. 137	Vn 2	second sixteenth note changed to A \sharp 5 (unison with Violin 1)

CATALOGUE REFERENCES

- RISM A/I S/SS 4600 [Répertoire International des Sources Musicales;
<https://rism.online/sources/990060929>]
- DTB Es-dur 1 [Hugo Riemann, ed., *Sinfonien der pfalzbayerischen Schule (Mannheimer Symphoniker)*, Jahrgang III, vol. 1 of *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern* (Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst, Zweite Folge), ed. Adam Sandbergern (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1902)]
- Dürrenmatt No. 19 [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 76 [Peter Gradenwitz, *Die Werke*, Teil II of *Johann Stamitz: Leben—Umwelt—Werke*, Taschenbücher zur Musikwissenschaft, vol. 94 (Wilhelmshaven, Germany: Heinrichshofen's Verlag, 1984)]
- LaRue 11843 (S789) [Jan LaRue, *A Catalogue of 18th-Century Symphonies*, Volume I: Thematic Identifier (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988)]
- Wolf Eb-1 [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 St. James's Chronicle; or, The British Evening-Post*, 12–15 May 1764, p. 3 (courtesy of the British Library Archives)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ESSAY

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



PERFORMANCE MATERIALS

Please contact *Musikproduktion Jürgen Höflich*: <https://musikmph.de/>

