

A detailed oil painting of Ignaz Moscheles, an elderly man with a full, curly white beard and mustache. He has light brown, wavy hair and is looking directly at the viewer with a slight smile. The background is a dark, textured reddish-brown. The text "MARK KROLL" is centered above his forehead.

MARK KROLL

Ignaz Moscheles

and the Changing World of Musical Europe

IGNAZ MOSCHELES AND THE CHANGING
WORLD OF MUSICAL EUROPE

IGNAZ MOSCHELES
AND THE CHANGING WORLD
OF MUSICAL EUROPE

Mark Kroll

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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DEDICATION

For Carol and Ethan.

And for my grandparents Edward Szjaitel and Dora Zorovitz,
who grew up not far from where Moscheles was born.

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List of Abbreviations

AMZ	<i>Leipzig Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung</i>
BAMZ	<i>Berliner Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung</i>
NZfM	<i>Neue Zeitschrift für Musik</i>
QMM&R	<i>Quarterly Musical Magazine & Review</i>
RAM	<i>Royal Academy of Music</i>
RMM	Charlotte Moscheles, <i>Recent Music and Musicians as Described in the Diaries and Correspondence of Ignaz Moscheles</i> , trans. A. D. Coleridge (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1873, rep. New York: Da Capo Press, 1970)
WAMZ	<i>Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat</i>

Preface

I HAVE often found it hard to read a preface; much harder do I find it today to write one.” I couldn’t have said this better myself. In fact, I didn’t. These words were written in 1899 by Ignaz Moscheles’ only son, Felix, as the opening lines of the preface to his book *Fragments of an Autobiography*.¹ Although I agree with Felix Moscheles, at least to a certain extent, I write this preface to my book to give readers a foretaste of what they will discover in its pages.

This book is, above all else, a story of a life well lived, of the personal and artistic journey of the son of a middle-class Jewish merchant in Prague who became one of the most beloved, revered, and influential pianists of the nineteenth century. I examine every aspect of Moscheles’ rich life and career: as a renowned virtuoso, pedagogue and conductor; a highly respected composer; a friend and mentor to many of his contemporaries; and a pioneer in the historical performance of early music. The first three chapters cover that life in detail, from his birth in 1794 until the death of this “Nestor of pianists,” as one obituary dubbed Moscheles, in Leipzig in 1870. We begin with Moscheles’ early years (1794–1825), when he was building his reputation as a performer and composer in Prague and Vienna, and enjoyed an unbroken succession of triumphs in the major musical capitals of Europe that culminated in a spectacular London debut as concerto soloist with the Royal Philharmonic Society. Chapter 2 traces the upward trajectory of Moscheles’ career during the twenty-one years he lived in London (1825–1846), when he became firmly established as one of the leading musicians not only in England, but throughout the European continent. Chapter 3 is devoted to Moscheles’ final years as the first professor of piano at the Leipzig Conservatory (1846–1870), a time of gradual retreat from the concert stage and an increasing focus on teaching and family.

We then examine aspects of Moscheles’ life and career in detail. Chapter 4 tells us about the techniques Moscheles used to attain the virtuosity for which he was so renowned, and the pedagogical methods he used to teach these techniques to literally hundreds of piano students. For this we turn to numerous eyewitness accounts by journalists, contemporaries, and students, and Moscheles’ own words. We also learn here about the instruments on which he preferred to

¹ Later in his book, on page 37, Felix asks: “who reads a preface?” I hope this is not the case here.

play, thus gaining insights about piano building during one of the most dynamic periods in the history of the instrument. Then there is Beethoven, Moscheles' hero when he was seven and his hero when he was seventy-four. Chapter 5 discusses Moscheles' actual encounters with Beethoven and his music, beginning with the exciting and formative time in Vienna when the young prodigy not only met his idol, but actually worked with him on the piano arrangement of *Fidelio*. Moscheles was also there when Beethoven needed him most, during the final months of his life in 1827, and he paid the ultimate tribute to Beethoven by performing most of his works, and editing several, after the great composer died.

The next chapter describes an even more remarkable relationship, that with Felix Mendelssohn. These two musicians realized that they were kindred spirits from the moment they first met in 1824, and they shared musical and life experiences to such a degree that it would be difficult if not impossible to find another friendship throughout music history that was so close, both personally and professionally. Chapter 7 finds Moscheles assuming the role of musical pioneer, a visionary who played an important role in the early music revival and the history of the solo recital. We conclude by asking questions about Moscheles' engagement with his Jewish heritage and the way he dealt with the challenges of anti-Semitism and assimilation that almost all Jewish artists faced during the nineteenth century.

Moscheles' family was central to his life. We began this preface with a reference to one of its members, and we will conclude with another, probably the most important: Moscheles' wife. Charlotte not only took care of her husband's personal and professional needs when he was alive, but remained the guardian of his reputation after he died. The most tangible expression of this is the book she published after Moscheles' death, *Aus Moscheles' Leben*, in Leipzig in 1872, which was translated into English the following year as *Life of Moscheles* (London, 1873), and reprinted the same year in New York as *Recent Music and Musicians*.² Drawn from her husband's diaries and letters, and from her own reminiscences and experiences, Charlotte's book represents the core source of information about Moscheles' life for this or any writer on the subject. However, it is evident that Charlotte did not include everything Moscheles had written in his diaries, perhaps omitting aspects or events that could place her husband in a negative light. One

² *Aus Moscheles' Leben, Nach Briefen und Tagebüchern, Herausgegeben von Seiner Frau*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humbolt, 1872); Charlotte Moscheles, *Life of Moscheles, With Selections from His Diaries and Correspondence In Two Volumes By His Wife, Adapted from the original German by A.D. Coleridge* (London: Hurst and Blacket, 1873, facs. Elibron Classics, 2005); *Recent Music and Musicians As Described in the Diaries and Correspondence of Ignatz Moscheles, Edited By His Wife And Adapted From The Original German By A. D. Coleridge* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1873, facs, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library Digital Collections, n.d.).

must therefore approach this information with an appropriate degree of scholarly caution and restraint, particularly because Moscheles' original diaries are now lost. Consequently, wherever possible I have used documentation from independent sources that either corroborates, contradicts, or adds to what Charlotte has written.

I hope I have presented in this book the most complete and accurate appraisal of this superb musician, and superb human being. Ignaz Moscheles was and remains a man worth knowing.

Acknowledgements

MANY friends, scholars, performers, librarians and family members helped me create this portrait of Ignaz Moscheles. I begin by thanking a member of Moscheles' family: his great great grandson Henry Roche, a professional pianist living in London. Henry was unfailingly generous, in fact eager, to share his treasure trove of documents, photos, paintings and even furniture inherited from Moscheles and his descendants, and his seemingly encyclopedic knowledge of his entire family is eloquently displayed in the epilogue I asked him to write. Robert Chambers, no relation to Moscheles, was also of great help, particularly at the beginning of this project. Bob had begun a doctoral dissertation on Moscheles in the 1970s, but decided to pursue other career options before completing it. When he learned that I was writing this biography, he did not hesitate in sending me not only what he had written, but also all the material he had collected during his research for the dissertation.

Three distinguished scholars, and long-time friends—Professors Wendy Heller of Princeton University, Lewis Lockwood of Harvard University and Robert Marshall of Brandeis University—read drafts of the entire manuscript, Wendy going far beyond the call of duty by reading every one several times. Another great scholar and friend, Professor Ellen Harris of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, shared her expertise on the Baroque era, and particularly the music of Handel, by reading Chapter 7. I also express my gratitude to Traute Marshall for deciphering Moscheles' handwritten comments in the examination books of the Leipzig Conservatory and transcribing them into readable German, and to Laure Schnapper, the author of the biography of Henri Herz, who provided me with valuable information about Herz's interactions with Moscheles, and the Jewish experience in nineteenth-century France.

My thanks to the many librarians and archivists who gave of their time and expertise during the years of research for this book. They include Dr. Susan Clermont (Library of Congress); Dr. Václav Kapsa (National Library of the Czech Republic); Dr. Markéta Kabelkova (Czech Museum of Music); Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Otto Biba, Director, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien; Drs. Barbara Wiermann, Ingrid Jach, and Nicole Höppner (Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Leipzig); and the countless librarians at the British Library, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the Bodleian Library (Oxford University), the Royal Academy of Music, and Harvard, Boston and Yale universities. I add thanks

to the independent archivist Viera Lippold for researching Moscheles' students at the Leipzig Conservatory, and Alison Beskin, a Royal Academy of Music graduate student living in London, for making some last-minute trips to the library of the RAM to retrieve some information about Moscheles' teaching there. I am also grateful for the support of a Franklin Research Grant from the American Philosophical Society, and the help and encouragement of Linda Musumeci at the Society, which enabled me to spend the necessary research time in England. I am equally appreciative of the subvention support provided by the Claire and Barry Brook Endowment of the American Musicological Society, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. I express my sincere gratitude to Michael Middeke of Boydell & Brewer Press for his vision in accepting my proposal to publish the book, and for his advice and encouragement during the process of writing it, and to his colleagues at Boydell, Megan Milan, Rosie Pearce and Rohais Haughton, for their help and patience with proofs, styles, permissions, and the countless other details as they guided me through the various stages that led to its publication.

I conclude this section as I began it—by thanking a member of a family, but this time one of mine: Carol Lieberman, my wife and performing partner for over forty years. It would be impossible to count the number of drafts she read, or the ways she helped me during the research and writing of the book. Remarkably, Carol had done this very thing before, when I was writing my biography of Johann Nepomuk Hummel, and I was amazed that she would actually be willing to do it again. I thank her for her invaluable suggestions, corrections and insights, and her seemingly limitless patience.

CHAPTER I

FROM PRAGUE AND VIENNA TO ENGLAND, 1794–1825

PRAGUE, 1794–1808

“THE best of fathers, husbands, sons, and friends.” This is how Charlotte Moscheles described her husband Ignaz in the final paragraph of her book *Aus Moscheles’ Leben*, published two years after his death, in 1872, and translated into English in 1873.¹ It would be entirely natural if Charlotte had exaggerated these characteristics at this sensitive time of mourning. However, newspapers, journals and eyewitness accounts confirm that Ignaz Moscheles was not only the man Charlotte described, but much more: a kind and generous person, a beloved artist, a virtuoso pianist, a renowned pedagogue, a fine conductor, and a musical pioneer.

Ignaz Moscheles was born in Prague on 23 May 1794. His parents, the cloth merchant Joachim (Chaim) Moyses (Moscheles) (7 February 1765/66–24 April 1805) and his wife Klara (or Klarysa or Kehla) Lieben (d. 16 March 1842), had six children. Isack or Isaak, as he was named and known in the Jewish community, was the first of two sons to survive infancy; Solomon died six months after his birth.² Moscheles describes a happy childhood within a close-knit, warm and

¹ See Preface for listing of all original publications. This book uses the latest version published in New York as the source: Charlotte Moscheles, *Recent Music and Musicians as Described in the Diaries and Correspondence of Ignatz Moscheles*, trans. A. D. Coleridge (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1873, facs, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library Digital Collections, n.d., rep. New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), p. 420. Hereafter referred to as *RMM*.

² Information supplied by Henry Roche and also found in Ingeborg Heussner, “Ignaz Moscheles in seinem Klavier-Sonaten, Kammermusikwerken, und Konzerten,” Ph.D. diss., University of Marburg, 1963, pp. 251–54. The names of the other children were Henrietta (b. 10 February 1788); Solomon (27 December 1792–3 June 1793); Simon (6 November 1795–16 March 1845); Eva (“Fanny,” 28 June 1797–1 February 1830); and Anna (“Nanny,” b. 13 July 1800). There are notes in the birth registers that specify that Solomon and Isack were circumcised, but none for Simon. Nevertheless, one can assume that he too was a recipient of this Jewish ritual for male children. The Moscheles

supportive family. His “mother was kindness, love and affection itself,” and his father was unfailingly “gentle and tender” with his eldest son.³

Music and the “military” were apparently Moscheles’ two passions as a little boy. These were the tumultuous years immediately following the French revolution, and Moscheles informs us with considerable charm that sometimes he had to put his music aside in order to fulfill his “duties as a Captain” by distributing “scabbard, helmets and other pasteboard armor to [his] troop.” At other times he had the opportunity to combine both passions, especially when he was one of the boys chosen to hold up the music for the military bands parading in front of the guardhouse.⁴

FIRST MUSIC LESSONS

Music, however, soon took precedence over military activities, real or imaginary. His father, an amateur musician, wanted one of his children to become a professional, and naturally chose Moscheles’ older sister Henrietta as the first to be given piano lessons. Moscheles implies that Henrietta was not pleased when her little brother could play her pieces better than she could—without lessons—just by listening, and especially after little Isaak supplanted her as the one destined for a musical career.⁵ These and other anecdotes from Moscheles’ childhood were apparently a fixed part of his autobiographical narrative, as they would be repeated in the “Memoir of Ignatz Moscheles” published in London by *The Harmonicon* in 1824 when the composer was thirty years old. This article tells us “the first indication of his talent for music” appeared “so early as his fifth year, since which the study of the art appears to have taken entire possession of his inclination.” The memoir also claims that the “eldest sister received her lessons on the clavi-chord (the piano-forte at that time being but little known in Bohemia),” and that Moscheles “manifested his impatience whenever [his sister] did not immediately comprehend her master’s instruction, and frequently cried out with much impatience, ‘Wrong, wrong,’ if she failed in striking the right key.”⁶

Whether Moscheles first played on a piano or clavichord, or if he was really that unkind to his sister, is difficult to ascertain. However, it was probably a wise decision to give him lessons, as by this time Moscheles’ insatiable musical curiosity had far outstripped his abilities. He tells us, both in the first pages of Charlotte’s

family lived at “House Number 742” at the time of Isaak’s birth, but moved several times between 1788 and 1794. None of the streets were named, but all the dwellings were certainly in the Jewish ghetto of Prague.

³ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 1.

⁴ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 3.

⁵ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 2.

⁶ *The Harmonicon*, October 1824, vol. II, no. 22, pp. 175–76.

book (which he wrote at a much later date, possibly in Leipzig in the 1860s), and almost fifty years later in the preface to his translation of Anton Schindler's biography of Beethoven (titled *The Life of Beethoven* and first published in 1840) that he borrowed the works of Dussek, Steibelt, Woelffl, Kozeluch and Eberl from a circulating library in Prague and read through them voraciously.⁷ These challenging pieces were probably well beyond the technical skills of this child with little formal training, as his father no doubt recognized. Therefore, at some point in 1803 or 1804 he wisely took his talented son to one of the most highly respected musicians and teachers in Prague, Friedrich Dionys Weber. The future director of the Prague Conservatory from its founding in 1811 until 1842, Weber was a fine musician with conservative tastes. He recognized immediately that Moscheles needed technique and discipline, and put him on a strict regimen of what he considered the classics: only the music of Mozart the first year, Clementi the second, and J. S. Bach during the third.

Moscheles' lifelong musical conservatism can probably be traced to his early training with Weber. Although Moscheles went on to become a proponent of all that was new and progressive in piano playing—and a friend of (or influence on) the next generation of composer-pianists, such as Chopin, Liszt and Schumann—he never lost his preference for the works of earlier eras. As we will discuss in later chapters, Moscheles became a passionate advocate of the music of Beethoven, a champion for the performance of Bach and Handel and, like his older colleague Johann Nepomuk Hummel, serves as a link between the classical style of the eighteenth century and the new directions of the nineteenth.

At this time in Moscheles' life, however, Beethoven was forbidden; Weber cautioned Moscheles that he shouldn't play even "a note" of his music.⁸ Moscheles apparently followed Weber's prescribed curriculum of Mozart, Clementi and Bach, but not, it seems, the restrictions about Beethoven. Moscheles confesses that his musical "cravings" got the best of him and he continued to visit the lending-library, where he discovered "crazy music, in opposition to all rule . . . Beethoven's *Sonata pathétique*." Moscheles could not afford to buy the score, so he "secretly copied it."⁹ Nevertheless, Joachim Moscheles tolerated his precocious child's departure from Weber's lesson plan, and remained the caring and

⁷ See Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 3 and Ignaz Moscheles, ed., *The Life of Beethoven, Including Correspondence with his Friends, Numerous Characteristic Traits, and Remarks on his Musical Works*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1841, facs. Charlestown: Biblio Life, 2010), Preface, pp. vi–vii.

⁸ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 3.

⁹ Moscheles, *Life of Beethoven*, Preface, pp. vii–viii. Like the use of younger ages for debuts of prodigies, the notion of "secretly copying" music is frequently used to describe budding geniuses. The most notable example is J. S. Bach.

supportive father throughout. He escorted his son to and from lessons, and kept a close check on his progress. Until, that is, the first great tragedy in Moscheles' life: his father's death from typhoid fever on 24 April 1805. In his diaries and memoirs, Moscheles recalls being fourteen at the time, but he is mistaken: he was actually not yet eleven.

MOSCHELES' BIRTHDAY

This was not the only time Moscheles was incorrect about the chronology of his life. The most dramatic and persistent error was his belief that he was born 30 May 1794.¹⁰ Official records prove that the actual date was 23 May, but Moscheles celebrated his birthday on the 30th throughout his life.¹¹ In a diary entry of 29 May 1832, for example, he writes: "My wife had prepared a pleasant surprise for me. Mendelssohn and the German artists came to dine with us on the eve of my birthday."¹² Twelve years later, and we still find Moscheles celebrating his birthday on the wrong date, writing in his diary "Felix [Mendelssohn] was the bright star of my birthday party on the 30th of May."¹³ This misinformation carried over to the press and Leipzig in 1866. Reporting about a testimonial in honor of Moscheles given by the Leipzig Conservatory of Music, *Dwight's Journal of Music* informs readers that Moscheles was born "in the spring (30th May), and is still a true child of spring."¹⁴

Why was Moscheles mistaken about the actual date of his birth? Perhaps the answer to this question can be found in Moscheles' Jewish heritage. This "child of spring" was born into a family of observant Jews, who would naturally have had their male children (such as Isaak Moscheles) circumcised. The discrepancy in dates might be explained by the fact that 30 May was not the date of Moscheles' birth but rather of his circumcision, which according to Jewish law had to be performed eight days after a boy was born.

AN AUSPICIOUS DEBUT

Despite his father's death, the eleven-year-old Moscheles must have continued his lessons with Weber, and the fact that his teacher gave his full approval for Moscheles to play his first public concert in 1807 indicates that he had made considerable progress during the previous two years. This debut recital was an

¹⁰ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 1.

¹¹ See Heussner, "Ignaz Moscheles in seinem Klavier-Sonaten," p. 251.

¹² Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 180.

¹³ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 300.

¹⁴ *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 21 July 1866, vol. XXVI, no. 9, p. 276 [see also *The Musical World*, 30 June 1866 (44:26), p. 114. Published letter to "D. Peters" from "Lavender Pitt, Stuttgart, June 5"].

important step in Moscheles' artistic development and for his future career, but there might have also been a financial component to this decision: the death of Joachim Moscheles had left his family in "not too affluent circumstances," as Moscheles described, and a public recital had the potential to bring in some additional revenue for the family.¹⁵

Moscheles made his Prague debut on 10 March 1807 in the *Konviktsaale* of Prague, sharing the stage with the violinist Karl Möser (1774–1851).¹⁶ The review tells us that "the young Moscheles, an eleven-year-old [*sic*] Israelite boy," performed "a very difficult Mozart concerto [with] maturity and an expressive sound and style of playing that makes us expect that he will become a full-fledged artist in the future." The reviewer also did not neglect to praise his teacher Weber, "the most respected composer and pianist" of Prague, for his pedagogical skill.¹⁷ It should not be surprising that the *Oberpostamtzeitung* mentions Moscheles' Judaism in this review. Moscheles was indeed a member of the "Israelite" nation at the time, although he was eventually baptized in 1832. This subject will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Moscheles repeated the success of his debut with a concert the following year, on 24 March 1808. The reviewer from the *Prager Oberpostamtzeitung* praised the "maturity and precision" of Moscheles' playing, but again reminded readers of the boy's religion, calling him a "twelve year old Jew."¹⁸ Moscheles was, of course, now almost fourteen, and having likely celebrated his *Bar Mitzvah* in May of the preceding year, was an adult according to Jewish law.¹⁹ The young man must have been very pleased by this enthusiastic reception to his playing, and also by the fee he received for the concert, since he saved the money and the wallet he put it in as treasured mementos. Both have survived to this day. Inside the wallet are found

¹⁵ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 5.

¹⁶ Karl Möser was born in Berlin. He made his first solo appearance in 1784, and eventually received the appointment of *Kammermusik* in the Berlin *Kapelle* of King Friederich Wilhelm II in 1797. He was forced to leave Berlin in 1806 after an affair with a princess, and ended up in London. "Konvikt" does not imply a prison, but rather an educational institution.

¹⁷ *Prager Oberpostamtzeitung*, 13 March 1807, p. 31, cited in *Musicalia v pražském periodickém tisku 1800–1825*, Jiří Berkovec, ed. (*Varia de musicam* 1989), p. 33. Making Moscheles eleven rather than his real age of thirteen is not really surprising, since it was common practice to present prodigies as younger than they really were. Three notable examples are Mozart, Hummel and Beethoven.

¹⁸ *Prager Oberpostamtzeitung*, 25 March 1808, p. 37, in Berkovec, *Musicalia v pražském periodickém*, p. 36.

¹⁹ Although we have no record of Moscheles' *Bar Mitzvah*, it is safe to say that he had one, since his conversion to Christianity would be many years in the future.

the fee and a note signed by Moscheles: “My first saved Gulden—in 1808—that I kept in this wallet.”²⁰

Moscheles recounts that he concluded his lessons with Weber after these debut concerts, but once again he is inconsistent in his reports. In the preface to his *Life of Beethoven* he gives the year as 1809, but offers an even earlier date in his diary, where he notes that his mother sent “her young musician to Vienna a short time after the death of [his] father;”²¹ that is, when he was eleven or twelve. Neither statement is accurate. Moscheles left Weber’s supervision and moved to Vienna in 1808, after completing both his *Bar Mitzvah* and debut in 1807, likely soon after the second concert in Prague.

VIENNA, 1808–1820

Moscheles might have been considered a man according to the Jewish religion, but he was really still only a fourteen-year-old teenager when he traveled to Vienna in 1808. We don’t know how, or with whom, but it is likely he went alone. Such a journey would be frowned upon in today’s overprotective world, but youth was not quite considered a helpless and vulnerable condition during the nineteenth century—in fact, it was often celebrated, as we have seen in the early professional careers of Mozart, Hummel and Maria Theresa Paradies, to name just a few. What is perhaps remarkable is that Moscheles was not only allowed to travel alone and settle in one of the major cities of Europe, but that he was also expected to earn his living there.

A VIENNESE WELCOME

Yet he succeeded, and quickly, due to a number of factors. First among these was his prodigious skill as a pianist, a gift that was highly prized and rewarded in the prevailing culture, and especially in Vienna, one of the most important musical centers in Europe. Another advantage, ironically, was Moscheles’ Judaism. Not only did it pose few obstacles to his success at this point (or to his very survival, as was often the case in Christian Europe), but actually proved to be of considerable benefit. Moscheles was warmly welcomed by the wealthy Jewish families of Vienna, the “tolerated Jews” who had achieved a high status in the social hierarchy in the city (at least on the surface) partly as a result of the “Edict of Tolerance”

²⁰ “Meine zuerst ersparten Gulden—in Jahre 1808—verwahrte ich in dieser brieftasche.” It was owned by a descendant of Moscheles, Sheila Lane of Vancouver, Canada (now deceased). It bears the title: “Vaters Brieftasche.” I am grateful to Henry Roche for providing this information.

²¹ Moscheles, *Life of Beethoven*, Preface, p. ix, and Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 5.

instituted by Emperor Joseph II in 1782—and probably more because they were rich. They were therefore able to exert considerable influence on Vienna’s cultural and political life.²² The great houses of Nathan von Arnstein (1748–1838); Bernard von Eskeles (1753–1839); Samuel Lewinger (1748–1838); Michael Lazar Biedermann (1769–1843) and others were scenes of frequent social gatherings, where the elite, both Christian and Jew, met, dined, talked politics, and conducted business.²³ They were also entertained by some of the city’s most esteemed musicians, who were invited to perform in their houses and teach their children. It was in these homes that Moscheles met many of his fellow artists, and of equal if not greater importance, he was able to establish his reputation among some of the most powerful and influential people in Vienna.²⁴ The relationships Moscheles forged here would prove of considerable value throughout his career, particularly the letters of recommendation written by the Jewish families on his behalf. These provided entry into the highest and wealthiest levels of European society, including Paris and London.

Several of these Viennese soirées were described in detail in the diary of Carl Bertuch, a representative from Weimar who attended the Congress of Vienna to promote the rights of German printers and publishers. Bertuch writes about elegant dinners, well-dressed guests and musicians, and music making at the highest level. One of the most memorable for Bertuch was the evening of 25 October 1814, when he heard Moscheles play his piano arrangement of Beethoven’s Overture to *Fidelio* at the von Arnstein house.²⁵ We will learn more about this arrangement in future pages.

Moscheles must have felt quite comfortable and well cared for in his new surroundings, but he also knew that he needed further education as a musician. He turned down the offer to study piano with Johann Andreas Streicher (1761–1833), who was teaching the children of Baron and Baroness von Eskeles at the time, because he felt that Weber had already set him on the correct path.²⁶

²² For more information on these families and Viennese Jewry in general, see Gerson Wolf, *Vom ersten bis zum zweiten Tempel* (Vienna: Verlag E. P. Tal, 1933); Hans Tietze, *Die Juden Wiens. Geschichte—Wirtschaft—Kultur* (Vienna: Verlag E. P. Tal, 1933); and Hugo Gold, *Geschichte der Juden in Wien* (Tel-Aviv: Olamenu Publishing House, 1966); The challenges of being Jewish in nineteenth-century Europe will be covered in Chapter 8 of this book.

²³ Eskeles was one of the founders of the Austrian National Bank.

²⁴ Moscheles received support from non-Jewish families as well, notably Countess Hardegg. However, most of it came from the wealthy “tolerated” Jews.

²⁵ Hermann Freiherr von Egloffstein, ed., *Carl Bertuchs Tagebuch vom Wiener Kongress* (Berlin, Verlag von Gebrüder Pastel, 1916), p. 39.

²⁶ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 5–6. Moscheles would perform with the Baron’s son in Prague in 1816, and teach his daughter Marie around the same time.

However, like so many aspiring composers before him, including Beethoven, Schubert and Hummel, Moscheles sought out the two greatest teachers of Vienna to complete his musical training: Johann Georg Albrechtsberger and Antonio Salieri. Moscheles first studied theory with Albrechtsberger for several months in 1808, and proudly reproduced in his diary the “diploma” he received:

ATTESTATUM.

The undersigned testifies that Ignatz Moscheles has for some months acquired under me such a good knowledge of thorough Bass and Counterpoint that he is capable (as he plays in a masterly way on the piano-forte and organ as well) of earning his bread anywhere with both these arts. And as he now wishes to set out on his travels, I think it only fair to warmly recommend him in all places he may choose to visit.

Vienna, 28th September, 1808

GEORGIUS ALBRECHTSBERGER,

Kapellmeister in der Domkirche zu St. Stephan.²⁷

Continuing along this familiar pedagogical path, Moscheles then went to Salieri for advanced instruction in the dramatic and lyrical arts—or as the memoir about Moscheles in *The Harmonicon* of 1824 described it: Salieri helped “give [Moscheles’] instrumental pieces more melody and flow.”²⁸ Salieri must have been much impressed with Moscheles, since he appointed his seventeen-year-old student to the post of *Kapellmeister-Adjunct* of the Court Theater, which Moscheles held for three years, from 1811 to 1813.²⁹ From his comments about this honor in the diary, however, it is difficult to tell what pleased Moscheles more: the appointment, or the fact that it provided this poor student on a budget with “a free pass to all of the theaters.”³⁰

FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH BEETHOVEN

In addition to completing his musical training and establishing a firm foothold in the city, Moscheles had one burning desire: to meet Beethoven, his childhood hero and the great composer of that “crazy music.” Moscheles describes these

²⁷ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 6.

²⁸ *The Harmonicon*, October 1824, vol. II, no. 22, p. 176. Cited in Carolyn Denton Gresham, “Ignaz Moscheles: an Illustrious Musician in the Nineteenth Century,” Ph.D. diss., University of Rochester, 1980, p. 6.

²⁹ The appointment is announced in the *AMZ*, 30 January 1811, vol. XIII, no. 5, under *Notizen*, p. 88.

³⁰ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 7.

feelings in his *Life of Beethoven*: “I longed to see and become acquainted with that man who had exercised so powerful an influence over my whole being.”³¹ Moscheles therefore decided to “follow Beethoven in all the productions of his mind. I never missed the Schuppanzigh Quartetts . . . or the delightful Concerts at the Augarten.”³²

Their first face-to-face encounter, however, seems to have been a chance meeting in 1810 at the shop of the music publisher Domenico Artaria, who—as we shall examine in Chapter 5—would be very supportive of Moscheles and publish a number of his early solo piano works, including the *Polonaisen*, op. 3, *Sonatine*, op. 4 and *Variations*, opp. 6 and 7.³³ Moscheles had actually seen Beethoven in the flesh some two years previously, but only from a distance. Moscheles was in the audience at the *Theater an der Wien* for the premieres of the fifth and sixth symphonies, the *Choral Fantasy*, op. 80 and the *Piano Concerto in G major*, op. 58 on 22 December 1808. The event seems to have been imprinted in his memory, since he could recall details from it more than fifty years later, including the exact spot where the orchestra broke down while playing the *Choral Fantasy*, and had to be restarted by Beethoven. Moscheles told Thayer that this was in the passage in the last movement “where for several pages every three bars make up a triple rhythm.” He described the mishap vividly: “I perceived that, like a run-away carriage going down-hill, an overturn was inevitable,” and he saw Beethoven “give the signal for stopping,” after which the orchestra started again without any problem.³⁴

Moscheles seems to have also encountered Beethoven at private social functions, or was at least in the same room with him. In his diary he recalls meeting Beethoven at the houses of “MM. [Nikolaus] Zmeskall and [Dr. Johann

³¹ Moscheles, *Life of Beethoven*, Preface, p. xi.

³² Moscheles, *Life of Beethoven*, Preface, pp. xi–xii.

³³ See Alexander Weinmann, *Vollständiges Verlagsverzeichnis Artaria & Comp.*, 3 vols. (Vienna: L. Kren, 1952), pp. 98–100. In 1814 Artaria published Moscheles’ op. 23, op. 26, and op. 27, and in 1815 his most famous work from this period, *The March of Czar Alexander with Variations*, op. 32. Other music put out by Viennese publishers during this time are op. 10 and op. 13, both by C. A. Spina in 1814, and op. 36 by Haslinger in 1815.

³⁴ Alexander Wheelock Thayer, and Elliot Forbes, *Thayer’s Life of Beethoven*, revised and edited by Elliot Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 449. Moscheles also shared his recollections of the concert, slightly altered, in a letter to the editor of the *Niederrheinischen Musik-Zeitung* in 1854. See *Niederrheinischen Musik-Zeitung in Köln*, Leipzig, June/July 1854. Cited in Klaus Martin Kopitz and Rainer Cadenbach, eds., *Beethoven aus der Sicht seiner Zeitgenossen*, 2 vols. (Munich: G. Henle, 2009), pp. 588–89. See also Moscheles, *Life of Beethoven*, vol. I, pp. 114–16 for a slightly different description of this event.

Nepokmuk] Zizius” and of hearing the premiere of the *Archduke Trio*, op. 97 on 11 April 1814 at the hotel *Zum römischen Kaiser*, with the composer at the piano. Moscheles admired the piece but expressed disappointment with the lack of “clearness and precision” in Beethoven’s playing.³⁵

Ludwig Spohr happened to have been at one of the rehearsals for this concert, and his description was published in the *Musical World* sixty-seven years after it had happened, in 1881. It was the first time Spohr had heard Beethoven play, and, like Moscheles, he was disappointed. Spohr writes: “Really, it was not a treat. The piano was utterly out of tune, and Beethoven, who could no longer hear a note, did not seem in the least put out by it. Moreover, there was nothing left of his astonishing virtuosity, formerly so much admired and praised. In the *forte*, the poor fellow struck the notes with such vigour that the strings snapped one after the other, while in the *piano* he glided over them so lightly that whole groups were inaudible. Without following the score, it was impossible to catch the connection of ideas. I could not help feeling deep commiseration.”³⁶

A SOCIAL NETWORK IN VIENNA

Among the most attractive characteristics of Moscheles’ personality described at the beginning of this book were a warm, gentle disposition and the sincere enjoyment of the company of friends. He also tells us that he had “a constitution . . . made of iron.”³⁷ With this combination of attributes, Moscheles threw himself into the giddy atmosphere of musical Vienna with all his enthusiasm, ambition and youthful energy, and thus met, worked and socialized with the greatest musicians of Europe who lived in or visited the city. Hummel, Spohr, Mayseder, Merck, Giuliani, Meyerbeer, and others became friends, colleagues or friendly rivals, and Moscheles established lifelong personal and professional relationships with many of them. There is no record of his meeting Schubert, but this is not surprising, considering Schubert’s youth and his shy and private nature. Hummel, for example, lived in Vienna longer than Moscheles (i.e., from 1786 to 1788, and 1793 to 1816), but he would meet Schubert for the first and only time

³⁵ Moscheles, *Life of Beethoven*, Preface, xi-xii, and Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 8.

³⁶ The *Musical World* also makes reference to Moscheles in this article, citing an entry in Moscheles’ diary that was worded a bit differently from how it appears in Charlotte’s book: “The master’s playing, if we leave out of consideration the genius by which it was inspired, pleased me only moderately. It no longer possessed purity or precision. I still remarked, however, traces of the grand style, that I had long been accustomed to find in his works.” *The Musical World*, 19 Feb 1881 (59:8), p. 108.

³⁷ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 323.

in 1827, when Hummel had rushed to Vienna to sit at the bedside of the dying Beethoven.³⁸

During these early days in Vienna Moscheles became particularly close to his Jewish “*Landsmann*” Giacomo Meyerbeer, whose piano playing Moscheles called “masterly” after one hearing.³⁹ Meyerbeer was apparently as energetic and social as Moscheles, and he describes in his own diary several days in 1813 that provide an indication of the active life-style of these young musicians. In the entry from Tuesday 22 June 1813 we read that Meyerbeer met Moscheles “on the street . . . and with him, called on Pixis, but we didn’t find him at home.” Later that week, on Sunday, 27 June, Meyerbeer apparently “rose early at five o’clock in order to make up a party with Petersen, Veit and Moscheles to travel to the baths at Baden, two post stages from Vienna. One can reach it in three hours . . . The elegant society at the spa all promenade along the big avenue of the park between twelve and one, a really brilliant gathering that delighted me.” The jolly group “called on Frau von Arnstein, Herr Reyer, Wüstenberger & Liepmann, [and] in the afternoon . . . traveled to Helenenthal . . . where they stayed . . . until seven o’clock, then journeyed back to the town, and to the theatre, where they performed *Aschenbrödel*—most tolerably for so small a theatre.” At seven o’clock in the morning of the next day, Moscheles and Meyerbeer “. . . left Baden and traveled back to Vienna via Laxenburg.”⁴⁰

Moscheles’ social interactions were further enhanced by his membership in the literary society known as the *Ludlamshöhle Gesellschaft*.⁴¹ Founded by August von Gymnich and the Austrian playwright Ignaz Franz Castelli in 1819, the *Gesellschaft* was already meeting in “Haidvogels Inn” at some point between 1816 and 1817. To join this club, new members had to provide evidence that they were able to entertain and amuse their fellow members, after which they became true members, or “Bodies” (those rejected were called “Shadows”). Hanson tells us: “Each new Body was then granted a new, humorous name that reflected

³⁸ See Mark Kroll, *Johann Nepomuk Hummel: A Musician’s Life and World* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), Chapter 5.

³⁹ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 8. After hearing *Les Huguenots* for the first time in 1839, Moscheles would write: “it is a great, nay, Meyerbeer’s greatest work, and it produced a powerful effect on me.” Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 259.

⁴⁰ *The Diaries of Giacomo Meyerbeer*, translated, edited and annotated by Robert Ignatius Letellier (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 323–24. Johann Veit (1790–1854) was a grandson of Moses Mendelssohn. “Petersen” cannot be identified.

⁴¹ The name was taken from Adam Oehlenschläger’s play of the same title. See Alice M. Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 57, citing Ignaz Castelli, *Memoiren meines Lebens*, ed. Josef Bindtner (Munich: Georg Müller, 1913).

his occupation or accomplishment.” For example, Moscheles’ was “Tasto, der Kälberfuss,” apparently because he loved calf’s liver and ate it every day (“tasto” refers to Moscheles’ fingers). Other members included Franz Grillparzer (“Saphokles, der Istrianer”); Mauro Giuliani (“Vitac Umo Capodastro”); Catellis (“Cif Charon, der Höhlenzote”); Carl Maria von Weber (“Agathus der Zieltreffer, Edler von Samiel”); and Antonio Salieri (“Don Tarar di Palmira”).⁴² Given the number of musicians in the group, music was probably an important part of the organization’s activities.

THE CONGRESS DANCES

As we indicated in our report from Carl Bertuch, the Congress of Vienna, which was held from September 1814 through June 1815, intensified the social and artistic life of the city to an almost frenetic pace. Vienna was suddenly overflowing with European royalty, aristocrats, heads of state, and diplomats. Among the famous figures who flocked to Vienna to celebrate the victory over Napoleon and participate in, or simply observe, the political decisions being discussed at the Congress were Alexander I, Emperor of Russia; Prince Karl August von Hardenberg of Prussia; Lord Castlereagh of Britain; Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington; and Charles Maurice de Talleyrand from Paris.

Musicians, who were constantly on call to provide non-stop entertainment for the participants, were some of the immediate beneficiaries of the Congress. As the Belgian Prince Charles Joseph de Ligne wryly observed, “the Congress does not work, it dances.”⁴³ The city became a paradise for composers and performing musicians in search of an influential audience. Moscheles was no exception: he found himself caught up in the swirl of banquets, concerts, operas, and balls at the great houses of Vienna, including those of von Arnstein and Lewinger. It was at one of these private concerts that Moscheles first performed the *Alexander Variations*, the work that launched his career as a piano virtuoso, and which would be identified with him for far longer than Moscheles might have wished.

⁴² For further information on the subject, see Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, pp. 57–58.

⁴³ This statement was attributed to the Belgian Prince Charles Joseph de Ligne, who is reported to have said: “Le Congrès ne marche pas, il danse.” Another translation more commonly used is “the congress dances well but it does not work.” See Deborah Hertz, *How Jews Became German* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 128 and 249, fn. 20, citing Heidi Thomann Tewarson, *Rahel Levin Varnhagen: The Life and Work of a German Jewish Intellectual. Texts and Contexts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998). See also *Revue de Bruxelles*, “Le Feld. maréchal Prince Charles Joseph de Ligne, Mémoires de l’académie de Bruxelles,” vol. xix (October 1839); Dorothy Gies McGuigan, *Metternich and the Duchess* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1975), p. 352; and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles-Joseph,_7th_Prince_of_Ligne

Commissioned by Countess Hardegg for an Ash Wednesday charity concert on 8 February 1815, Moscheles tells us that he composed it in about one week, from 29 January to 5 February.⁴⁴

PUBLIC CONCERTS

Through these connections with the leading musicians and teachers in Vienna, and because of the quality of his performances for nobles both privately and in conjunction with the Congress, Moscheles had established himself sufficiently in Vienna to begin presenting public concerts. One was a benefit concert at the *Kärntnertheater* on 18 March 1814.⁴⁵ Another was at the “Botanical Gardens” in the winter of 1815, where Moscheles and Mayseder performed in a series of evening serenades given by Count Palffy.⁴⁶ On 17 March 1816 Moscheles performed at the “Kleine Redoutensaal,” the *Prager Zeitung* reminding its readers that Moscheles is “here a beloved pianist, but also considered by connoisseurs to have an excellent talent for composition.” The paper reported that Moscheles played “a new overture for the entire orchestra . . . that enchanted the listeners . . . a concert-polonaise for piano with full orchestra” (i.e. probably op. 56 in E-flat major), plus an improvisation that earned Moscheles “great applause.”⁴⁷

Before embarking on his first European tour of 1820–1821, one culminating in Paris and London, Moscheles would spend his final years in Vienna, composing, teaching and, most importantly, playing the piano in the most prestigious venues of Vienna and in cities throughout the Habsburg lands, including Dresden, Munich, Leipzig, Carlsbad, Pest, and his birthplace Prague. Performing for such a wide and diverse audience, Moscheles was able to hone his craft as a virtuoso pianist, introduce his new compositions to the public, and meet in each city distinguished musicians and influential nobles and officials who would invite him back in the future. The reviews he received for his performances and compositions were so positive, in fact glowing, that his name and reputation as one of the greatest virtuosos of his era spread throughout Europe and Great Britain, and even in America. The following table lists the most important concerts from this period.

⁴⁴ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 12.

⁴⁵ See inscription in GB-Lbl Hirsch 5866, *Autographen-Sammlungen Ignaz Moscheles und Reserve Alfred Bovet, Catalogue XXXIX 95. Schwarzenberg (Joseph Fürst zu) (1769–1833)*: “Wien den 18t März 1814. Wird ersucht, in einem Wohltätigkeits Konzert in Kärntnertheater mitzuwirken.”

⁴⁶ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 14.

⁴⁷ *Prager Zeitung*, 21 March 1816, p. 112. Program courtesy of Henry Roche.

Table 1.1 Concerts in Vienna and Graz, 1817–1820

Date: 14 January 1817

Location: “Musical Academy” in the “k. k. priv. Redoutensaale”⁴⁸

Program: “Overture.” “Polonaise for Piano with the accompaniment of the Orchestra,”
 “Variations on the Alexander March for piano and accompaniment by
 orchestra and Janissary music.”

Review: “This superb young musical artist, born in Prague, has again visited his
 fatherland after a long absence, and placed before us on this day his eminent
 artistic talents, in the most brilliant manner . . . at the end of the Academy
 Mr. Moscheles played a free fantasy that here excited, as in the earlier pieces,
 general admirations and raucous applause. He points to the future for most
 pianists through power and vivacity, with fire and precision combined, and
 his velocity is so uncanny, that our eyes cannot even follow his fingers.”⁴⁹

Commentary: In a letter to Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski written on 5 December
 1856, Moscheles identifies this work as his “*Concert-Polonaise* in E-flat
 major, op. 59 [sic].” In this letter, which is in response to an inquiry
 from Count Wasielewski about Moscheles’ first meetings with R.
 Schumann, Moscheles tells the count that he found this information in
 his “collection of concert programs.”⁵⁰

Date: 21 January 1817

Location: Unidentified

Program: “Concertstücke” by Field and Steibelt, and the *Alexander Variations*.⁵¹

⁴⁸ This program was announced with great anticipation in the *Prager Zeitung* of 11 January 1817. Reporting on the concert of 20 December 1816 given by Hummel’s student Joseph von Szalay, who played the *Alexander March* by Moscheles, the review tells us that Moscheles “has arrived in Prague on his return trip from Saxony to Vienna, and will also give in his fatherland an exhibition of his extraordinary artistic talents.” From *Prager Zeitung* (1814–1825) 11 January 1817, p. 11, in *Musicalia v prazském periodickém tisku*, p. 58.

⁴⁹ *Prager Zeitung* (1814–1825) 14 February 1817, p. 45, in *Musicalia v prazském periodickém tisku*, p. 58.

⁵⁰ See Renate Federhofer-Königs, *Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski (1722–1896) im Spiegel Seiner Korrespondenz* (Tutzing: Verlegt bei Hans Schneider, 1975), pp. 196–198. The letter reads:

“Dear Herr Wasielewsky (!)

Overwhelming business has prevented me from giving to you the long-delayed information any earlier, and I hope that you do not hold me any less in your good graces because of this. There are some gaps in my diaries that make it unclear to me in which year I made my acquaintance with R. Schumann. My intercourse with him stands out very clear in my thoughts, but I am not able to specify to you the date of our meeting. In reference to my concerts, at which he heard me, saw and spoke with me, I offer the following extracts from my collection of concert programs . . . in the year 1820 I began my concert tour to Holland, France and England, and I am convinced that my acquaintance and friendship with R. Schumann had already been established before that time.” Moscheles concludes by writing “In readiness to help further.”

⁵¹ See Federhofer-Königs, *Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski*, p. 196.

Date: 21 September 1817

Location: “Festsaal, im k. k. Augarten”

Program: “Chamber music concert” with “Gentile Borgondio [and] Werner (Trompeter)”

Review: Moscheles’ playing “. . . was in all nuances extremely interesting.”⁵²

Date: 8 March 1818

Location: “Festsaal, im k. k. Augarten”

Program: “Musical academy of Adalbert Gyrowetz” (Kapellmeister of the *Hoftheater*).

Review: The WAMZ praised Moscheles’ “new variations” (i.e., *Alexander Variations*).⁵³

Date: 16 April 1818

Location: “Niederösterreichischen landständischen Saale”

Program: Concert with Mayseder and Giuliani. Beethoven: *Overture in C major*, op. 115, “Zur Namensfeier.”

Review: Moscheles’ playing was called “highly excellent” by the reviewer, who also tells us that the variations he had heard on 8 March “again pleased everyone.”⁵⁴

Commentary: Beethoven’s *Overture*, op. 115 was listed with the sub-title *à la Chasse*. Schindler wrote: “When Beethoven asked why this was done and who took it upon himself to do it, he received no answer, each of the three soloists blaming the other.”⁵⁵

Date: 23 April 1818

Location: “Landständischer Saal”

Program: Concert with Mayseder and Giuliani.

Review: Moscheles’ performance of his “Rondeau brillant” was received “with the highest enthusiasm.”⁵⁶

Date: 30 April 1818

Location: “Landständischer Saal”

Program: Concert with Mayseder and Giuliani. Beethoven: *Overture in C major*, op. 115.

Review: These three virtuosi earned the “laurel wreath” for this concert. In a later review that covered all three concerts of 16, 23 and 30 April, the critic praised Moscheles’ skill as an extemporaneous player, particularly his playing of a theme given to him “without preparation,” which was characterized by “originality, luster and cleverness.”

Commentary: We also learn in this review that Moscheles was teaching during this time. The paper mentions a concert by his student, the ten-year-old

(Continued)

⁵² WAMZ, 2 October 1817, Jahrgang I, no. 40, pp. 347–48.

⁵³ WAMZ, 21 March 1818, Jahrgang II, no. 12, p. 101.

⁵⁴ WAMZ, 25 April 1818, Jahrgang II, no. 17, pp. 149–50.

⁵⁵ Anton Schindler, *Beethoven as I Knew Him*, trans. and ed. Donald MacArdle (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), p. 215. See also Kopitz and Cadenbach, *Aus der Sicht*, p. 654, fn. 7.

⁵⁶ WAMZ, 2 May 1818, Jahrgang II, no. 18, pp. 158–59.

Table 1.1 (Continued)

daughter of Lichtenstein Kapellmeister Wenzel Sedlak, who played works of Dussek and Hummel.⁵⁷

Date: 10 May 1818

Location: Landständischen Saal

Program: Beethoven: *Overture in C major*, op. 115.

Commentary: The actual date of this concert was 16 April 1818.⁵⁸

Date: 18 August 1818

Location: Theater zu Unter-Meidling to benefit the poor

Program: Moscheles' collaborators were the singers "F. Bogner, Julius Cornet, Joseph Barth and Fräulein von P," the cellist Merk and the famed guitarist Mauro Giuliani.⁵⁹

Date: 26 December 1818

Location: "Holy Christmas week" concert, "Universitäts-Saal"

Program: ". . . zum Besten des Central-Armenverein-Fonds." On the program was the *Piano Concerto in C-sharp minor*, op. 55 of Ferdinand Ries.

Review: Moscheles' playing of "this difficult and brilliant composition" was praised by the WAMZ for its "lightness, sureness, attention to detail, roundness and neatness, to the joy of all listeners."⁶⁰

Date: 25 May 1819

Location: Private performance at the home of Prince Ferdinand von Stockhammer

Program: Johann Nepomuk Hummel, *Sonata in F-sharp minor*, op. 81.

Review: "Mr. Moscheles gave us a private musical evening on the twenty-fifth, in which he let us hear his Fantasy with Variations and, for the first time, Hummel's newest sonata in F-sharp minor."⁶¹

Commentary: Moscheles' choice of Hummel's *Sonata in F-sharp minor*, op. 81 shows his virtuosity, confidence, and courage. It is one of Hummel's most famous, and most challenging compositions. Schumann called it "titanic," and wrote in 1839 that the "F-sharp minor sonata will alone immortalize [Hummel's] name."⁶² The critic wrote that

⁵⁷ For the concert of 30 April, see WAMZ, 9 May 1818, no.19, pp. 166–67. For the review of all three concerts, see WAMZ, 16 May 1818, no. 20 pp. 173–75.

⁵⁸ MacArdle writes: The date "10 May that appears in Thayer, III 478 is presumably a repetition of Schindler's error." See Donald W. MacArdle, *Beethoven as I Knew Him* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), p. 362, fn. 279.

⁵⁹ For the concerts of 16 April, 23 April and 10 May, see Stefan Weinzierl, *Beethovens Konzerträume*, (Frankfurt: Bochinsky), 2002, pp. 232–233. For 18 August see WAMZ, 28 August 1818, no. 35, pp. 303–304.)

⁶⁰ WAMZ, 3 January 1819, Jahrgang III, no. 1, pp. 7–8.

⁶¹ WAMZ, 2 June 1819, Jahrgang III, no. 44, col. 351–52.

⁶² For "titanic," see Kroll, *Johann Nepomuk Hummel*, p. 280. For "immortal," see NZfM 26 April 1839, vol. X, no. 34, p. 135, and Kroll, *Johann Nepomuk Hummel*, p. 276.

Moscheles “proved himself to be a master” in this “difficult, gigantic” work.⁶³

Date: 14, 17 and 23 June 1819

Location: Graz

Program: None given.

Review: “The widely known composer and virtuoso on the piano, Mr. Moscheles, our foremost pianist, will shortly travel to Gratz, where he will, we do not doubt, experience raving acclaim, which he has always received here.”⁶⁴

Commentary: The reviewer for the concert on 14 June tells us that not since Rode’s concert in 1812 did one see such a large audience, and that it was “sunk in awe” by the way Moscheles played “the most difficult passages with wonderous calmness.”⁶⁵

Date: 12 December 1819

Location: Grosser Redoutensaal

Program: Moscheles played one of his concertos, the first two movements new, the third a reworking of the *Concert-Polonaise*, a “French Rondo Concertante” for piano, violin and orchestra, and he improvised on the “Abschied des Troubadours.”

Commentary: See below.

Date: 25 December 1819

Location: Private home

Program: *Concerto in E-flat major*, op. 56

Review: The *Concerto in E-flat major* is “a brilliant and grandiose composition . . . [that] made an entirely deep impression,” and Moscheles is “our number one piano player.”⁶⁶

Commentary: See below.

⁶³ For the concert on 10 May, see WAMZ, 23 May 1819, no. 21, pp. 183–84. For the 25 May performance WAMZ, 2 June 1819, no. 44, pp. 351–52.

⁶⁴ The event is briefly mentioned in *The Harmonicon*, April 1824, vol. II, no. 16, pp. 71–72. See also AMZ Vienna, 5 June 1819, col. 364, cited in Tom Beghin, “Three Builders, Two Pianos, One Pianist: The Told and Untold Story of Ignaz Moscheles’s Concert on 15 December 1823,” *19th-Century Music*, vol. 24, no. 2, Special Issue: Nineteenth-Century Pianism (Autumn, 2000), pp. 115–148, here p. 128, fn. 39.

⁶⁵ For the 14 June concert, see WAMZ, 23 June 1819, no. 50, p. 401. For the concerts on 17 and 23 June, see WAMZ, 7 July 1819, no. 54, pp. 432–34.

⁶⁶ For the concert on 12 December, see WAMZ, 18 December 1819, no. 99, cols. 811–13. For the review of the performance of 25 December, see WAMZ, 8 January 1820, no. 3, cols. 20–22. Lest the reader gets the impression that all of Moscheles’ notices in the papers were complimentary and positive, we cite a critical letter from a “Herrn A” about Moscheles’ compositions that appeared in the WAMZ of 1 March 1818. Mr. “A” calls Moscheles “a well-prepared and at the same time tasteful pianist” but then cited a remark in a Dresden newspaper that claimed Moscheles was not up to the level of the other composers. Nevertheless, Mr. “A” does soften his remarks a bit by offering the

There are a number of notable comments in the review of the concert on 12 December 1819. Apparently Moscheles' European tours and his plans to travel west were not secrets. The writer observes the growth in the pianism of Moscheles, "who is already at the zenith of a brilliant style," and also shares with his readers the news that Moscheles was "leaving us, [but] hopefully not forever." Perhaps even more significantly, the writer makes a perceptive comment about Moscheles' personality. Harkening back to Charlotte's description of her husband's character with which we began this book, the reporter praises Moscheles' "modesty and humanity . . . that make people treasure him as a person." The review continued: "We have full confidence that this first-rate artist, by his modesty and humanity that make people treasure him as a person, will everywhere be shown the same respect that one pays to his talents and his personality in all of Vienna. May he return with rewards for Art and himself!"

The concert of 12 December was also a topic of conversation with Beethoven. On 13 December 1819 someone who seems to have a touch of anti-Semitism in him tells Beethoven: "Yesterday was Moscheles' concert. Have you heard nothing about it? At the end, the Jew improvised," after which another person asks: "He—and improvising?" A few days later we learn in the conversation books from this period that Moscheles was not satisfied with the concert, and that some listeners were dissatisfied with both his pianism and music: "He is said to have gotten more than 5,000 fl., even though the Akademie turned out badly. In general people were dissatisfied as much with his compositions as with his playing."⁶⁷ The *AMZ* does confirm that the audience was not as large as Moscheles had hoped.⁶⁸

LISTENING AND COMPOSING IN VIENNA

Moscheles' experiences in Vienna—his exposure to other music and musicians, plus his own concertizing—had a strong impact on his development as a composer. For one thing, the voracious appetite for all types of music that Moscheles displayed as a child apparently never left him. Despite his extraordinarily busy schedule, Moscheles tells us that he rarely missed an opportunity to hear the latest compositions by the leading composers, including operas by Rossini and Spohr. He expressed particular pleasure at hearing, probably for the first time, a Handel

explanation that this might be traced to Moscheles' young age. See *WAMZ*, 14 March 1818, no. 11, pp. 91–93.

⁶⁷ Theodore Albrecht, ed., *Beethoven's Conversation Books* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, forthcoming), *Heft* 5 (13–20 December 1819), *Blatt* 5r and *Blatt* 19v, respectively. I am grateful to Theodore Albrecht for allowing me to include the excerpts from his forthcoming publication that he generously shared with me in draft form.

⁶⁸ See *AMZ*, 26 January 1820, no. 4, col. 57.

oratorio, *Samson*, writing that this work “elevates my soul! The first time I heard it, I was in ecstasies of delight.”⁶⁹ The music of Handel, as we shall see in the chapter devoted to early music, would play an important role in Moscheles’ future activities as a performer and editor.

Moscheles also found time to compose, although he did so “during the small hours of the night,” but still awoke at 7AM to study English, piano and violin.⁷⁰ In addition to the compositions mentioned earlier, he published some of his best chamber works during his years in Vienna. These include the *Introduction et Variations concertantes*, op. 17 for piano, violin and cello (Haslinger, 1813), *Grand Duo Concertant*, op. 20 for piano and guitar (Artaria, 1813), *Six Variations for Piano and Flute, or Violin*, op. 21 (Haslinger, 1814), *Grand Duo Concertant*, op. 34 for piano and cello, or bassoon (Artaria, 1814), and *Gran Caprice, followed by a Potpourri*, op. 37 for piano and cello or violin (Spina, 1816). The *Sextet in E-flat Major*, op. 35 for piano, violin, flute, two horns and cello was written during this time, but published in Leipzig by Hofmeister, 1816.⁷¹

A notable composition from this period was not published, however, nor has it survived: a cantata for the great synagogue of Vienna to celebrate the victorious return of Emperor Franz from his victory over Napoleon. The celebrations in the synagogue of Vienna began on 19 June 1814 with a “Symphony” followed by the singing of psalms and the unveiling and procession of the Torah scrolls, accompanied by music and chorus “composed by the famous well-known Jewish (‘Israelite’) musical artist Moscheles.”⁷² That Moscheles would have been commissioned to write such a work is not surprising, as he was not only a friend of the great Jewish families of Vienna, but also an active member of the city’s Jewish congregation that had commissioned the work.

However, such gestures of civic pride and assimilation, and Moscheles’ fame as a composer, still did not prevent him (along with the entire Jewish community in Vienna) from being subject to anti-Semitic laws and restrictions. For example, the Viennese *Staatsratsgutachten*, Pribram S. 374 specified that “the Jews are only tolerated . . . under the conditions of the Tolerance-tax” that they were forced to pay. Among those listed as owing this tax in 1817 are “the dentist Noe Ascher, wound doctor Jacob Altenberg, kosher meat inspector Moses Fischer, and musical artist

⁶⁹ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 11.

⁷⁰ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 9.

⁷¹ Moscheles’ fluency as a composer even became a topic of conversation with Beethoven. On ca. 19 May 1823 someone, probably nephew Karl Beethoven, tells his uncle: “Moscheles always composes diligently.” Albrecht, *Beethoven’s Conversation Books*, Heft 33, Blatt 11r.

⁷² Hanoch Avenary, ed., *Kantor Salomon Sulzer und seine Zeit* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag 1985), p. 39.

Iganz Moscheles.”⁷³ Vienna would welcome Moscheles, but only up to a point, and often making him aware of his second-class status as a Jew.

CONCERTS IN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING LANDS, 1816–1818

Moscheles’ concerts in the German-speaking lands of Europe while he lived in Vienna were equally extensive. Table 1.2 lists those for 1816–1818.

Table 1.2 Concerts in the German-Speaking Lands, 1816–1818

Date: August 1816

Location: Prague

Program: “A concert for the poor” that netted 2,400 florins.⁷⁴

Date: 5 August 1816

Location: Karlsbad

Program: “Alexander march” [i.e., op. 32], “by popular demand.”⁷⁵

Review: The *Prager Oberpostamtzeitung* proudly wrote about this performance and success of Prague’s native son. The reporter even reminded readers of Moscheles’ concert there as “an eight-year-old student” and informed them about his “great taste and artistry” and the “power, lightness and security” with which he played passages of the “greatest difficulty.”⁷⁶

Commentary: The success of the 1816 Karlsbad concert would resonate several times in Moscheles’ future: in the audience was the six-year-old Robert Schumann, who had been brought by his mother especially to hear this great young pianist. Schumann never forgot the experience. He reminisced about it in a letter to his mother of 15 December 1830: “Do you remember how we sat together at a concert at Carlsbad [*sic*], and you whispered to me joyfully that Moscheles was sitting behind us, and then how every one made way for him, and how modestly he carried himself? I mean to take him for my model in everything.”⁷⁷ Many years later, on 20 November 1851, Schumann, after receiving notice that Moscheles had dedicated his *Sonata for Piano and Cello*, op. 34 to him, wrote: “I am honored and delighted by the dedication of your

⁷³ Avenary, *Kantor Salomon Sulzer*, p. 72.

⁷⁴ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 14–15. This probably refers to the concert Moscheles performed with a member of the Eskeles family, the “young Ritter von Eskeles.” He is described as “a very talented dilettant on the cello,” and the pair played Moscheles’ “Pot-Pourri for cello and piano.” See *Prager Zeitung*, 17 September 1816, p. 261, cited in Berkovec, *Musicalia v pražském periodickém tisku 1800–1825*, p. 73.

⁷⁵ See Federhofer-Königs, *Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski*, p. 197.

⁷⁶ *Prager Oberpostamtzeitung*, 29 August 1816, p. 242, cited in Berkovec, *Musicalia v pražském periodickém tisku 1800–1825*, p. 73.

⁷⁷ Robert Schumann, *The Letters of Robert Schumann, selected by Dr. Karl Storck*, trans. Hannah Bryant (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971), p. 61. See also Kroll, *Johann Nepomuk Hummel*, p. 291, fn. 13.

Sonata, and I regard it as an encouragement to my own aspirations, in which you took a friendly interest from early days. When I, completely unknown to you, kept for more than twenty years at Karlsbad as a relic, a concert program that had been yours, how little I dreamt of being honored in this way by so illustrious a master. Accept my sincerest thanks for your kindness.”⁷⁸

Date: 8 October 1816

Location: Leipzig

Program: The first half featured the “Overture,” to the ballet “Die Portraits” (i.e., op. 40), a “Chor, von Schicht,” and then an “Introduction und Concert-Polonaise.” The second half began with a “Capriccio for Violin by A. Romberg,” followed by Moscheles’ *Alexander Variations*, now a signature work of the composer-pianist, and ended with an improvisation, the customary conclusion to piano programs of this time.⁷⁹

Commentary: Moscheles was absolutely overwhelmed by Leipzig’s Gewandhaus Orchestra and its hall, and describes with enthusiasm the concert he heard there on 6 October 1816.⁸⁰ This should not be taken to mean that the quality of the concerts in Vienna Moscheles had heard or participated in was any less than those in Leipzig. Nevertheless, the “fit” with Leipzig appears to have felt very comfortable. Moscheles’ enthusiastic reaction to Leipzig during this first visit takes on added meaning when we consider that the city would be Moscheles’ home for the last twenty-four years of his life (1846–1870).

Date: 14 October 1816

Location: Leipzig

Program: Piano concerto by John Field (“No. 4”), and a repeat of the “Introduction und Concert-Polonaise.”

Commentary: The response to the first concert was so positive that this additional concert had to be hastily arranged.⁸¹ Moscheles also had the opportunity to meet Clara Schumann’s father Friedrich Wieck and Mendelssohn’s teacher Carl Friedrich Zelter when he was in Leipzig, and lost no time in visiting Bach’s church St. Thomas, where he was impressed by a fine performance of “eight part motets and fugues.”⁸²

Date: 27 October 1816

Location: Altenburg

Program: None specified.

(Continued)

⁷⁸ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 17. See also Renate Federhofer-Königs, *Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski*, p. 196, fn. 8.

⁷⁹ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 20.

⁸⁰ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 19.

⁸¹ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 21.

⁸² Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 19.

Table 1.2 (Continued)

Date: 28 December 1816

Location: Dresden

Program: Moscheles writes in his letter to Count von Wasielewski that “I played, among other things, with A. Klengel in his double concerto.”⁸³

Date: 7 August 1817

Location: Baden

Program: With Mayseder, Merk and Giuliani. The program included an unnamed overture arranged by Moscheles for two pianos, eight hands (the other pianists listed were “Leidesdorf, Halm and Worzischek”); Moscheles’ *New Variationen* for violin with quartet accompaniment, a work that the AMZ reported would soon be published by Steiner & Company; a *Neues Pot-pourri* for piano and cello; and a closing improvisation that “again showed the virtuosity and brilliant manner of [Moscheles] playing.”⁸⁴

Commentary: The European debut tour in 1817 included concerts in Munich, Augsburg, and Amsterdam, where Moscheles tells us he completed the *Concerto in G minor*, op. 60, his most popular concerto. Moscheles played it often during his career, and would choose it for his farewell concert with the Philharmonic Society of London in 1861.

Date: 15 June 1818

Location: Pest

Program: Moscheles played “a large Overture” and his “Polonaise-Concerto for piano in E-flat, with the delightful accompaniment of three tympani, tuned to E-flat, B-flat and C-flat.” The program concluded with the *Alexander Variations*, the “Turkish music” in the variations receiving special praise.

Commentary: Moscheles’ performance in Pest seems to have been unannounced. The reviewer observed that “the sudden appearances of the praiseworthy ‘tone-hero’ Mr. J. Moscheles . . . has pleasantly surprised our musical world.” “We hope . . . to hear him here again” were the reviewer’s final comments.⁸⁵

We learn a good deal about the social hierarchies and musical tastes of Dresden—and Moscheles’ attitudes towards the nobility—from his descriptions of his visit there in December of 1816. For one thing, Moscheles became so ill that the doctors ordered him to be confined to his room for an entire month. He used the time

⁸³ See Renate Federhofer-Königs, *Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski*, p. 197. Moscheles speaks very highly of A. S. A. Klengel (1783–1852) in his diaries: “I found in August Klengel an interesting acquaintance. He plays in the Clementi style, his toccatas, fugues, and gigue are as solid as they are artistic and thorough.” Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 22.

⁸⁴ *WAMZ*, 28 August 1817, no. 35, pp. 302–3.

⁸⁵ *WAMZ*, 4 July 1818, no. 27, pp. 238–40.

profitably, however, to compose *Trois Marches Héroïques*, op. 31 for piano four-hands, and the “Andante” of the *Sonata for Piano in E major*, op. 41.

Moscheles managed to meet some of the city’s excellent musicians after he emerged from his sick bed, but he was much less impressed with the hall and performances than those that he had seen and heard in Leipzig. Moreover, as a result of the Dresden court’s infinitely more complex political and social hierarchies, arranging public concerts also proved far more difficult. Moscheles worked around these problems by using the strategy that had proved so successful in Vienna: he played at the houses of Dresden nobles, ambassadors and court officials. Although these private appearances enabled him to give the public concert on 28 December mentioned above, Moscheles could never accept such behavior on the part of these and other members of European aristocracy, who would often eat and talk during his performances.⁸⁶ A product of the Enlightenment, a follower of Beethoven and the French and American revolutions, Moscheles knew quite well that the time was coming, if it were not already there, when musicians, artists, businessmen and even members of the working-class would no longer readily accept rudeness or mistreatment at the hands of the nobility.

A WANDERING JEW

We can only speculate as to how the Jewish Moscheles was treated on these tours through Austria, Hungary and Germany, in light of the fact that he could find dangerous anti-Semitism in every village or roadside inn during this time. Nor do we know how aware he might have been of the difficulties suffered by Jews in the places that he visited. There is only one significant entry about this subject in his diaries from this time, although it is certainly possible that Charlotte might have omitted many others. During an excursion from Karlsbad to the town of Eger in 1816, Moscheles writes that he visited “Mördgässchen, ‘Murderer’s Lane,’ where, in the days of darkness, all the Jews, except the family of Seligsberg, whose descendants still inhabited the same spot, were cruelly put to death.”⁸⁷

Notably, Moscheles also describes seeing “the Polish Jews in the Brühl” among the crowds and noisy students in the streets of Leipzig during his visit there in 1816.⁸⁸ He made no further comment about them at that time, but we will see in

⁸⁶ Moscheles, *RMM*, pp. 22–23. Moscheles would express similarly negative comments about such boorish behavior on the part of the artistocracy when he described a concert in Paris in 1822, at which Lafont, “. . . in the middle of a piece was tapped on the shoulder by the Duke of—with ‘C’est assez, mon cher.’” Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 46. Moscheles names the aristocrat in *Aus Moscheles’ Leben*, p. 68, as the “Duke of Devonshire.” It is understandable that the name would be omitted in the English edition.

⁸⁷ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 17.

⁸⁸ Moscheles, *RMM*, p. 18.