



The Alkan Society

Registered Charity no. 276199

www.alkansociety.org

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Society concerts

Society concert series: Jan Hugo

St Mary's Church, Ealing, London on 3rd March 2017

With the support of the Keyboard Charitable Trust, the Society sponsored a recital by the South African Jan Hugo, prize winner of the 2014 *Royal Overseas League piano competition* and the 2016 *Alkan-Zimmerman competition*. Jan's programme included four of Alkan's preludes from op. 31 and the *Quasi Faust* movement from the *Grande Sonate* (op. 33), as well as two of Debussy's preludes (*Danseuses de Delphes* and *La puerta del vino*) and Liszt's *Légende I* (*St Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds*), *Sarabande* and *Chaconne* from *Handel's Almira* and the third *Mephisto Waltz*.

Later in the year, Jan reached the semi-final stage in the 11th *International Franz Liszt Piano Competition*. The Society congratulates Jan on his success.



Society concert series: Peter de Jager

St Mary's Church, Ealing, London on 7th April 2017

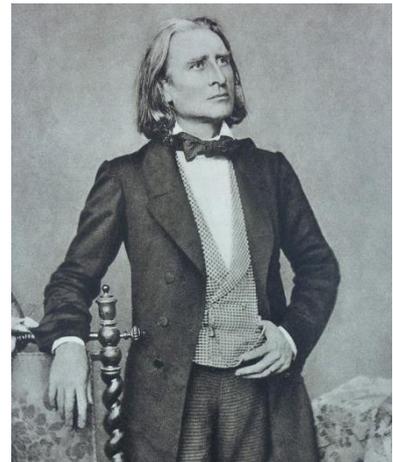


Our next recital was by the Australian pianist and composer Peter de Jager. Peter is one of Australia's most exciting musicians, with a repertoire encompassing all periods of western classical music as well as musical theatre and cabaret.

Peter won the inaugural *Australian International Chopin Competition* in 2011, and was awarded fifth prize and best Australian competitor at the *Southern Highlands International Piano Competition* in 2013. In 2015 he was a finalist in the *Symphony Australia Young Performers Award*, and in 2016 he was awarded second prize in the *Australian National Piano Award*.

Peter played Alkan's *Symphonie* (op.39, nos 4-7), followed by the first UK performance of Part I of Chris Dench's *Piano Sonata*, a work he commissioned following his award of the 2014 *Freedman Fellowship*.

Society concert series: Mark Viner and SoYeong Kim
St Mary's Church, Ealing, London on 19th May 2017



Our third recital in the series, coinciding the Society's 2107 AGM, was a piano duet and duo extravaganza by our Chairman Mark Viner and SoYeong Kim.

The programme started and ended with works by the colourful Louis Moreau Gottschalk, his *Grand morceau de concert* based on Rossini's *William Tell* overture (four hands, one piano) and the *Grande Tarantelle* (op.67) in an arrangement for piano duo. The filling of the sandwich consisted of Alkan's *Trois Marches* (op.40) and the *Variations-Fantaisie sur deux motifs de Don Juan* (op.26) (both four-hands) and Liszt's own adaptation of his *Symphonic Poem Mazeppa* for piano duo (S.640).

Forthcoming events

Joint societies dinner-recital

Lancaster Hall Hotel, London on 17th January 2018 (17:30 for 18:15)

The annual dinner-recital, held in conjunction with related music societies, is presented in 2018 by the Schubert Society, in collaboration with the Alkan, Liszt, Mahler and Wagner Societies. Works by all of these composers will be included. The Alkan contribution will be performed by Andrew Yiangou, who was awarded the prestigious Mills Williams Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music for his studies on the Artist Diploma Course 2016/17. Andrew will be playing the third and fourth movements of the *Symphonie* for Solo Piano (op. 39, 6-7).

Attendance is restricted to members of the participating societies and their guests. Tickets (£43, including dinner and wine) may be purchased through the Wagner Society website (www.wagnersociety.org) or from their ticket secretary (ticketsecretary@wagnersociety.org).



Membership news

As of November 2017, there are 95 fully paid-up members of the Society (including Honorary members); there are seven student members.

Whilst the largest number of members are from the UK (68), 11 other countries are represented, including USA (14 members), Australia (7), Germany (5), France, Japan and the Netherlands (4 apiece), and Austria (3). Eight new members have joined us in 2017 so far. This is all good news: our membership is rising year-on-year, albeit modestly!

Premio Alkan per il virtuosismo pianistico

Hartmut Schock, Gebhardshain, Germany

On the 17th of June 2017, the first Alkan Award for piano virtuosity took place at the Castello di Castano, Agazzano in Italy. The Patron of the event was Vincenzo Maltempo, and the members of the Artistic Committee were Professor Mauro Porta, Enrico Lainati and Eric Véron. Member Hartmut Schock represented the Society at the event, and reports as follows.



Never before had I witnessed such a piano spectacle, a musical fairy tale of the highest enjoyment for all the senses. The event took place in a wonderful summer landscape in villages and towns – and always among friendly people. I was really glad I had applied to attend. An illustrious circle of about 125 Alkan fans from all over the world met in the park of the Castello.

Guests were picked up from the parking lot with little electric carts, greeted and invited for an initial drink

At 7pm, the evening started in the courtyard of the Castello.

Vincenzo Maltempo started the programme with *Comme le vent, Prestissimamente*. The only piece from op. 39 which might reasonably be described as a Study is the one which opens it, at “a hair-rising speed of 160 2-16 bars to the minute, or 16 notes to the second.” (Ronald Smith, 1978, booklet EMI Records Ltd).



Maestro Maltempo realised this in unbelievable speed, every note sparkled, no blurry notes – breathtaking!

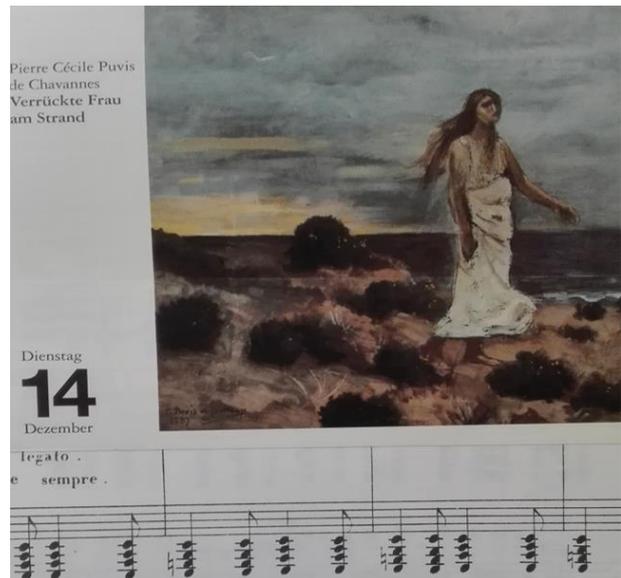
In the middle of the etude, he applied the 2, 3, 4, 5 fortissimo chords in a very effective way and then rushed on. Finally, the “wind music” lost its power, only a small breeze was left.

18:30 – 19:00	Arrivo invitati e registrazione		
19:00 – 19:10	Vincenzo Maltempo		
	Ch.-V. Alkan	: Comme le Vent	5:00
19:10 – 19:30	Presentazione della serata		
19:30 – 20:15	Vincenzo Maltempo		
	Ch.-V. Alkan	: Symphonie pour piano seul	27:00
	Ch.-V. Alkan	: Chanson de la folle	4:30
	F. Liszt	: Rhapsody nr. 2	10:00
20:15 – 21:00	Cena		
21:00 – 21:15	Premiazione e presentazione del premiato		
21:15 – 21:30	Raffaele Battiloro		
	F. Liszt	: Rigoletto Paraphrase	6:00
	Ch.-V. Alkan	: Festin d'Esopo	9:00
21:30 – 21:45	Finale a quattro mani		
	L.M. Gottschalk	: Grande Tarantelle	5:30

I have listened to the “symphony” four times: 1988 in London performed by Ronald Smith, twice performed by Marc-André Hamelin and now by Vincenzo Maltempo. I really enjoy this piece of music a lot. The dark beginning captures me every time I hear it – brilliantly played by Maltempo. He played the second movement slightly slower than Hamelin. In my opinion, that is the appropriate tempo for a funeral march. Maltempo emphasised effects of impact and accentuation, I’ve never heard it like this before. Also the F-major-middle section – a glimpse in heaven! The dry chords at the end of the first movement, from the *piano e staccato* to the *triple*

forte, seemed to chase each other - very impressive!

After flashing past the Minuet and Trio, the finale, *Presto*, arrives. Raymond Lewenthal has described the relentless finale as “a ride in hell”. How can one play the staccato-octaves of the left hand so fast? Confidently and with virtuosity, Maltempo chased through hell.



He continued with a strange piece: Number 8 of the 25 Preludes op. 31, *La chanson de la folle au bord de la mer* (in A-flat minor). One can understand that, both in the dark bass and in the desperate circling of the very simple melody of the right hand, the mad woman is trapped in her illness.

This was followed by a firework of piano music, the second rhapsody of Liszt, which Maltempo burned through in confident virtuosity and certainty, to the fascination of the guests. Receiving his applause and introducing the intermission, he seemed as fresh as at the start.



The host invited us to an excellent dinner in a terrific ambience with the best of weather. During intermission, I got the chance to introduce myself to Maestro Maltempo (pictured right with the author), to thank him for the friendly and generous invitation and to pass on the greetings of the Alkan Society.

While the guests had an excellent snack, the host took the chance to tune up the piano. After intermission, the first winner of the Alkan award presented himself to the audience; a very friendly young man, Raffaello Battiloro.

He started his programme with Liszt's *Rigoletto Paraphrase*. It was immediately apparent how great his art already is: a sparkling, clean thunderous keys, elegant arrangement of the paraphrase. Never had I heard a Steinway produce such delicate sounds so softly. Maybe the special atmosphere in the atrium added to it. This was followed by *Le Festin d'Esopé*, the last of the 12 op. 39 etudes, which was surely eagerly awaited by all Alkan fans. Now Battiloro could really show off the magic of his piano playing – really, a worthy first-prize winner. Bravo!¹

¹ The performances are available at: www.facebook.com/premioalkan/?hc_ref=ARSNME0P_ueWnBhyjFLhqzC4fEXqVyOWrJRonE1Tx-4nWCElxgNH2n95TRqP6wtlIXI&fref=nf



As a special at the end, Maltempo and Battiloro played the *Grande Tarantelle* by Louis Moreau Gottschalk², a happy, fast dance, which was played by both pianists with a lot of fun and verve.

Finally, the award ceremony. Professor Porta presented the award, complimented everyone and thanked the sponsor of the event, *Vailog* (A Segro Group Company), from Assago Milanofiori. Professor Porta is on the left in the picture, together with Raffaello Battiloro, Vincenzo Maltempo, young pianist Emma Bertola (the grand-daughter of the Castello's owner) and Eric Véron of *Vailog*.

A wonderful extraordinary piano happening, unforgettable hours of special music were presented to the audience by two very special piano players³.



English translation by Elisabeth Schock, Hannover

² It's absolutely worthwhile to learn more about the life and work of L. M. Gottschalk (8 May 1829 to -18 Dec 1869). No pianist of the 19th century is likely to have travelled further for concerts than he has. Only in two years, he has travelled 80,000 miles through North America ("Don't shoot the piano player!"). He wrote US ethnic and patriotic music (e.g. Bamboula, Le Bananier, La Savane, The Banjo, Union, ...), Music from Spain (Manchega,...), West Indian souvenirs (e.g. Souvenir de Porto Rico, Marche des Gibaros!!) and Concert and Salon Music (Pasquinade, The Dying Poet,...). See: Starr, S. F. (1959), *Bamboula! The Life and Times of Louis Moreau Gottschalk*, New York & Oxford.

³ Luckily, I had a little time left, to visit the "Museo del Violino" in Cremona the following day. There, one can admire violas, celli, string basses which belonged to Stradivari, Amati, Guarneri and many other masters. Also modern instruments are displayed; the best instruments which are annually identified in a competition can be seen there.

Connecting Berlioz and Alkan: a Germanic language in 19th-century Paris

Laura Snyderman, Peabody Institute, Baltimore

While differing in many respects, Berlioz and Alkan shared a common interest in building on the works of the preceding Austro-German musical traditions of Beethoven and others. This paper serves to compare and contrast select Alkan and Berlioz compositions, and assess their shared and differing musical tastes as a result of Germanic influence.

As a result of the political and social upheaval from the French revolution, the turn of the nineteenth century brought new waves of influence into the Parisian musical scene. With the founding of the Paris Conservatoire in 1795 in an attempt to compete with Italian and German institutions, the Conservatoire opened its doors with the goal of providing a more standardized educational system for musicians, with a distinctly French system of musical study (Mongrédien & Pauly, 1996, p. 14, 21). By the nineteenth century, the Paris Conservatoire had a thorough systemization in its teaching practices, implementing its own publications and standardizing curriculum based on French manuals. As romantic sentiment grew in artistic and literary fields as a result of the new social individualistic ideals commanded with the political upheaval, the Conservatoire further laid the foundation for Paris to become one of the main cities for musical performance and study.

Ironically, German music, in particular Beethoven's works, had a profound effect on Parisian musical circles. Notwithstanding some of the initial criticism from the "violent polemics that were tinted with obvious nationalism," Germanic music was eventually adopted into its curriculum with the help of German pianists' successful reception in the Parisian concert scene, and, more importantly, Habeneck and Cherubini's insistence on its performance (Mongrédien and Pauly, 1996, p. 316, 323). What originally stemmed from a nationalistic wave paved the way for the Paris Conservatoire's most successful and potentially peculiar students, Berlioz and Alkan among them, in revolutionizing conventional musical forms towards a new harmonic language. Sharing a mutual affinity for Germanic influences in their compositional output, and in particular Beethoven's contributions, Berlioz and Alkan utilized the Germanic inspiration in their works as they strove to find their own unique voices in an enlightening and conflicting time for Parisian musical language.

Berlioz entered the Conservatoire in 1826, around the time Alkan was beginning to gain influence in the Parisian salons outside of the Conservatoire. After hearing a performance of Beethoven's third and fifth symphonies conducted by Habeneck at the Conservatoire in 1828, Berlioz remarked that, "Beethoven had opened before me a new world of music, as Shakespeare had revealed a new universe of poetry" (Macdonald, 2005). This was pivotal, as Berlioz had only written vocal music prior to this point in his career, leading to the premier of the famed *Symphonie Fantastique* a short two years following (Macdonald, 2005).

Symphonie Fantastique was revolutionary, leading to extreme opposition in musical criticism for its expansive instrumentation, unlike any other symphony prior, and for its programmatic quality. Its musical language, while new and inventive, presents clear influences from the Germanic music of Beethoven and Weber in its key choices, in its musical devices, and even, to some degree, in its use of form.

Fétis declared *Symphonie Fantastique* as having "no taste for melody but a feeble notion of rhythm; that his harmony composed by piling up tones into heaps that were monstrous, was nevertheless flat monotonous" (Fétis, 1971, p. 217). Fétis seemed to miss Berlioz's point in dismissing harmony as a function and its use as a coloristic tool, with rhythm and counterpoint between the densely orchestrated lines to carry his piece forward.

Robert Schumann rebutted Fétis's review after an extensive study of a piano reduction. Schumann thought the work was ingenious, for its humanistic and explosive emotive qualities, making up for the occasional awkward harmonic language (Schumann, 1971, p.229). Unlike Fétis, Schumann did not consider the work to be monotonous. Schumann compared this symphony to Beethoven, mentioning the Ninth Symphony for his structure in writing a five-movement symphony (although Beethoven's symphony was written with four), and for its similar organic cohesion (Schumann, 1971, p. 229).

Berlioz was not alone in taking inspiration from Beethoven – however, pianistic composition dominated in Paris through the 1820s and 1830s. Pianist-composers Liszt, Chopin, and Alkan were most influential at the time for their virtuosic display at the keyboard.

Dubbed by Hans von Bülow¹ as “The Berlioz of the Piano,” Alkan’s treatment of piano sonority was especially noteworthy for its focus on musical expressivity through virtuosity rather than the development of harmonic idiom (Jeffrey, 2016). “He was one of those nineteenth-century piano composers who wanted to make the piano sound like an orchestra, but he carried his experiments in this direction much further than his contemporaries – Liszt, for example” (Bloch, 1941, p. 10). Alkan was conscious of timbre, often posing “high bell-tones” against “growling tremolo in the bass” to expand the registers of the piano against its monochromatic nature (Bloch, 1941, p. 10). Alkan owed much of this type of sonority to his study of the late Beethoven sonatas, but he developed further, as did Berlioz, in expanding orchestral writing towards a grander form (Bloch, 1941, p. 10). “The use of ‘bell’ effects is another typical Alkan feature,” and while it was typical of Romantic pianistic writers to exploit this timbral effect, “Alkan handles them in a manner foreshadowing the Impressionist piano writers—i.e., by using them in interesting syncopations, or, often, to form strange dissonances with the rest of the musical material” as, for example his third etude of Op. 15, *Morte* (Bloch, 1941, p. 12). The next instance of such a harmonic sonority is perhaps seen in Ravel’s *Le Gibet* sixty years later (Bloch (1941, p. 12).

Alkan demonstrated an interesting harmonic language, propelled by familiar harmonies with the introduction of sudden alterations, which were very characteristic of Alkan’s quirky and occasionally harsh sounding musical style (Bloch, 1941, p. 14). “Among his immediate contemporaries [Alkan] is closest to Berlioz, who also ‘does coolly the things that are most fiery’” (Smith, 2000, p. 204). Anticipating Ravel and Albeniz, Alkan uses dissonances in *appoggiaturas* incorporated in the chord, expanding the rhythmic value of the *appoggiatura* and placing the dissonance on a “strong beat in conflict with the fundamental harmony” (Bloch 1941, p. 15). Alkan particularly enjoyed odd harmonic effects towards cadence points, altering tonic into the minor unexpectedly a distorted use of Picardy thirds (Bloch, 1941, p. 19). Much like Berlioz has awkward key changes in his *Symphonie Fantastique* and other works, Alkan often rapidly changes keys through the “juxtaposition of the two tonic chords” (Bloch, 1941, p. 20).

One of Alkan’s most exuberant and interesting works, the *Grande Sonate*, op. 33, was composed following many of his Beethovenian studies and transcriptions, providing one of the more revolutionary pianistic compositions of the nineteenth century.

Alkan wrote a (now lost) eight-handed transcription of the *Allegretto* and *Finale* from Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony which was performed with Zimmerman, Gutmann, and Chopin in 1838 (Eddie, 2007, p.7). It is less well-known that Alkan, alongside his brother Napoléon, Zimmerman, and Pixis performed the *Allegretto* again in 1845, as announced in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*.

* * M. Valentin Alkan, ce pianiste qui possède une individualité si bien marquée et qu'on peut toujours entendre avec plaisir, même après avoir entendu tous les autres pianistes, donnera mercredi prochain, 30 avril, dans les salons d'Erard, une deuxième et dernière soirée, dont voici le programme : 1° Premier mouvement et menuet du grand quintetto de Spohr pour piano, flûte, clarinette, cor et basson ; 2° allegro du concerto à deux pianos de M. Zimmerman, exécuté par MM. Val. et Nap. Alkan ; 3° trois morceaux dans le genre pathétique (3° livre de caprices), par Val. Alkan ; 4° Andante de la sonate en ut pour piano à quatre mains de Mozart ; 5° étude en ut dièze avec accompagnement de double quatuor, introduction et marche triomphale, saltarelle par Val. Alkan ; 6° allegretto de la symphonie en la, de Beethoven, exécuté sur deux pianos par MM. Zimmerman, Pixis, Val. et Nap. Alkan.

Berlioz described his own large-scale works as ‘Babylonian’, and one could say as much of Alkan’s *Grande Sonate* describing the four ages of man, which he wrote in his thirty-fourth year, predating the Liszt Sonata by four years. Alkan further likened his work to an organic development of his imagination, much like Berlioz used his imagination in *Symphonie Fantastique*, and the less known sequel *Lélio*. Both of Berlioz’s works utilize his hallucinatory perceptions to elaborate on his personal grievances against the misguided Parisian public. In a similar fashion, Alkan prefaces his work with a credo of sorts, much like Berlioz exhibits in many of his works. Alkan writes, “Permit me to invoke the authority of Beethoven. It is known that, toward the end of his career, this great man was working on a systematic catalogue of his principal works, in which he was to indicate after what plan, what memory, what type of inspiration they had been conceived” (Bloch, 1941, p. 26). Comparable to Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* use of

¹ An esteemed German conductor and pianist who married Liszt’s daughter, Cosima, and conducted for the premieres of Wagner’s *Tristan and Isolde* (1865) and *Der Meistersinger von Nurnberg* (Bülow, 1857). Ironically, he was a great fan of Wagner, prior to Wagner’s affair with his wife.

On a dit et écrit beaucoup de choses sur les limites de l'expression musicale. Sans adopter telle ou telle règle, sans chercher à résoudre aucune des vastes questions soulevées par tel ou tel système, je dirai simplement pourquoi j'ai donné de semblables titres à ces quatre morceaux et employé quelquefois des termes tout à fait inusités.

Il ne s'agit point ici de musique imitative; encore moins de musique cherchant sa propre justification, la raison de son effet, de sa valeur, dans un milieu extra-musical. Le premier morceau est un **SCHERZO**; le deuxième un **ALLEGRO**; le troisième et le quatrième un **ANDANTE** et un **LARGO**; mais chacun d'eux correspond, dans mon esprit, à un moment donné de l'existence, à une disposition particulière de la pensée, de l'imagination. Pourquoi ne l'indiquerais-je point? L'élément musical subsistera toujours, et l'expression ne pourra qu'y gagner; l'exécutant, sans rien abdiquer de son sentiment individuel, s'inspire de l'idée même du compositeur: Tel nom et telle chose semblent se heurter, pris dans une acception matérielle, qui, dans le domaine intellectuel, se combinent parfaitement. Je crois donc devoir être mieux compris et mieux interprété avec ces indications, quelque ambiguës qu'elles paraissent au premier coup d'œil, que sans leur secours.

Qu'il me soit permis, du reste, d'invoquer l'autorité de Beethoven. On sait que, vers la fin de sa carrière, ce grand homme travaillait à un catalogue raisonné de ses principaux ouvrages, dans lequel il devait consigner d'après quel plan, quel souvenir, quel genre d'inspiration ils avaient été conçus.

C. V. ALKAN.

autobiographical and literary content as a programmatic musical outline, Alkan's sonata is similarly conceptually self-reflective, and less strictly beholden to form, with only the second movement pertaining to a loose sonata form (Bloch, 1941, p. 26-27). For interest, the Preface to the first edition is reproduced here.

Much like how Berlioz utilizes entirely different keys between movements in *Symphonie Fantastique*, Alkan's sonata uses different keys in each movement. The first movement starts in D major and moves to its relative minor, B minor. Alkan concludes the first movement by modulating to a major tonic in B

major. Similarly, Berlioz begins *Symphonie Fantastique* in C minor with beginning allusions to the relative major (E flat), ending the movement in C major. Alkan's second movement begins in an entirely different tonality, D sharp minor, and concludes in F sharp major. This compares to Berlioz's second movement, which begins in A major after the C major ending of the first movement (Smith, 1987, p. 69).

Alkan's key sequences differ from Berlioz in that the key of each movement consistently moves up a half step from that of the previous movement. Thus the third movement of the *Grande Sonate* moves to G major from F sharp major, and the final movement moves from the preceding G major to G sharp minor (Smith, 1987, p. 69). However, Berlioz uses similar motion in some of his movements; for example, the third movement of *Symphonie Fantastique* briefly brings in E major and then resolves to the movement's key in F major (Berlioz, 1997, pp 58-60). Berlioz employs G minor in his fourth movement following an F major movement. The whole step motion contrasts with Alkan's motion; yet, the direction and contour of the key sequencing between movements, and sometimes within movements, is similar to that of the *Grande Sonate*.

Alkan's *Grande Sonate* moves from light and textured themes in his first movement to an unusual scherzo with ABA form that ends with a coda. The second movement of the *Grande Sonate*, "Quasi Faust", employs a powerful and evocative *Sturm und Drang* heaviness. *Quasi Faust* utilizes a rich texture, and an exciting ending to compensate for its stormy minor introduction (Bloch, 1941, p. 27). The third movement employs a less revolutionary sentiment, using a simple diatonic characterization exposed to Alkanian harmonic discrepancy and imitation (Bloch, 1941, p. 27). The fourth movement utilizes a great deal of chromaticism and ominous *tremolando* effects, concluding in a dark and somber tone much like the *Symphonie Fantastique*.

Alkan found much of his influence from earlier baroque German composers. Berlioz claimed the four Great masters were Gluck, Weber, Mozart, and most importantly Beethoven. However, Berlioz often remarked against his classical predecessors, seen by his continued admonition of Mozart's trivialities with what Berlioz believed to be dramatic moments in his operas and symphonies (Perl, 2007, p. 19). Berlioz remarks on Mozart's Symphony No. 38, K. 504, that it seems, "infinitely removed from Beethoven's sublimities" and while Mozart's music is "pleasant, gentle, graceful, witty" Beethoven is "majestic...arous[ing] respect not without some element of terror" (Perl, 2007, p. 23). Berlioz is

² This movement is later used as a point of reference in Liszt's metamorphoses, which utilizes themes between the Devil and Faust in years to follow. Curiously, Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* was written in 1845 around the same time Alkan began to work on his *Grande Sonate*. Both Alkan's and Berlioz's musical vocabulary display a similarity in influence and commonality in the Parisian musical society following Gérard de Nerval's translation of Goethe's *Faust* in 1827. Berlioz claimed his *La Damnation de Faust* to be less of a formal rendition of Faust's work, and more so an imaginative compilation in which he could supply a musical "légende dramatique" (Berlioz, 1966).

especially critical of Donna Anna's aria in *Don Giovanni* for its *cavatina* in "degenerating [the aria] without warning into music of such appalling insanity and vulgarity (...) Mozart in this passage has committed one of the most odious and idiotic crimes against passion" (Berlioz, 1966, p. 93). Berlioz believed that Mozart enjoyed "notes for notes' sake" versus using expressive or poetic music, much the same as Haydn used in his symphonies (Perl, 2007, p. 24). As for the earlier Baroque composers, Berlioz showed little if any interest.

Especially in his middle to late period, Alkan began to include many works of J.S. Bach in his performances, and use them as a basis for his compositions. Often misunderstood in Parisian society for his antiquated taste, Alkan ignored the popular currents of Parisian salons towards often less performed programs in his concert series, frequently including Bach's F major Toccata along with the D minor keyboard concerto on his programs paired with sonatas by Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann as seen in 1876 in his *Six Petits Concerts de Musique* concert series (Eddie, 2007, p. 20-21). Even in his earlier works, Alkan demonstrates his baroque leanings with his inclusion of baroque forms such as famed *Saltarelle* op. 23, and even earlier his *Gigue et Air de Ballet dans le style ancien* op. 21 (Eddie, 2007, p. 7). Alkan also demonstrated an affinity to Mozart, transcribing a number of movements from his symphonies and string quartets for piano.

Alkan often remarked against the shallow pianistic practices in Paris, with which the works of Bach would suffer under mediocre teachers, such as, in Alkan's view, Antoine Marmontel (Eddie, 2007, p. 13). Berlioz shared a similar sentiment with Alkan against the French musical performance, often remarking on the mediocrity of the musicianship and the compositions of his Parisian colleagues (Berlioz, 1966). As Berlioz was struggling to reach the public in 1840, possibly a result of a few failed performances at the hands of mediocre players, he travelled to elsewhere in Europe to achieve greater success (Elson, 1912, p. 438).

With Wagner's performances becoming prevalent in Parisian audiences in 1860, Alkan enumerated his ill-feelings towards Wagner's works in letters to Ferdinand Hiller³ (Eddie, 2007, p. 15). When asked to compare Wagner to Berlioz in 1860, Alkan retorts to Hiller that Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* was "only a pale imitation" of Berlioz, even though Alkan appeared to lack appreciation for Berlioz's music, admiring only his "marvellous understanding of certain instrumental effects" (Eddie, 2007, p.15). In a letter to Hiller, Alkan likewise mentioned the possibility of travelling to Cologne to crusade against "Wagner, Liszt, and company" (Eddie, 2007, p. 14). Berlioz questioned some of the harmonic language employed in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*; however, Berlioz held a fondness towards Wagner's works for its boldness (Eddie, 2007, p. 15).

Notwithstanding their tastes for conservatism *versus* romantic decadence, in many ways Alkan and Berlioz shared an unusual appreciation of Germanic influence on musical performance and compositions, at least more so than their Parisian contemporaries. With the waves of Germanic influence taking hold of the Parisian musical scene in conflict with the nationalistic will to maintain a conservative French form, Charles-Valentin Alkan and Hector Berlioz managed to fuse their conservative teachings at the Paris Conservatoire with the newer, more expansive harmonic language adapted to a variety of forms. While not always sharing a common opinion on musical progress, with Alkan leaning towards a conservative form *versus* Berlioz's kinship to Wagner and Liszt, they both shared a keen interest in preserving and utilizing the new ideas formed in Beethoven's compositions, and those of preceding Austrian/German composers. This is most clearly seen from the analysis of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and Alkan's *Grande Sonate*, as both works employed similarly new harmonic progressions and programmatic elements in their works.

Developing an original harmonic language, innovative programmatic element and musical characterization, Alkan and Berlioz merged the conflicting Germanic influences and their studies at the Paris Conservatoire, each innovating their own language and questioning prevailing musical conventions as individualistic, revolutionary musical figures in nineteenth-century Paris.

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³ Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885) was a German composer, conductor, writer, and music-director (Hiller, 1905).

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Alkan's *Impromptu sur le chorale de Luther*

Alkan's op. 69, entitled *Impromptu sur le Choral de Luther* "Un fort rempart est notre Dieu", was dedicated to François Benoist (1794-1878), Professor of Organ at the Paris Conservatoire for an astonishing 53 years. Both Alkan and César Franck graduated from his organ class, and other students included Adolphe Adam, Georges Bizet, Léo Delibes and Camille Saint-Saëns. However the score of the *Impromptu* specifies *Piano à pédales ou à trois mains* rather than organ. Ronald Smith¹ considers the matter of performance on the organ for both the *Impromptu* and the *Benedictus* (op.54): "although both compositions contain passages that might sound magnificent on the organ, their more pianistic textures would require drastic revision". Smith continues: "Presumably Alkan was able to play them both on his pedal-piano even with its straight keyboard; yet the textural complexities of the *Impromptu* in particular make inhuman demands on a single player".

In 1982, the composer Roger Smalley transcribed the *Impromptu* for two pianos, according to Ronald Smith "redistributing the parts in a most masterly manner", adding "the effect of the *Impromptu*, in this arrangement, is overwhelming". Smalley claimed that the *Impromptu* emerges "as one of the three greatest works for the medium from the Romantic era: only the Brahms St Anthony [Chorale] and the Reger-Beethoven Variations can measure up to it"².

The two-piano transcription has been splendidly recorded by the late Anthony Goldstone and Caroline Clemmow (on Toccata Classics TOCC0070)³. However the manuscript has never been published, and only a few copies exist. Society member Richard Murphy has obtained a copy; the title page and part of the last page (in E♭ major) are reproduced here.

The transcription is dedicated to longstanding Society member John White, who, when contacted recently by Richard Murphy, said that he did not remember Smalley's gratifying dedication. He wrote:

It was my pleasure to have been Roger Smalley's composition professor at the Royal College of Music during the early 1960s. My contribution to his musical background was the introduction to an alternative world of late Romantics including Busoni, Medtner, Szymanowsky and Alkan. He felt enriched by this, and, being an excellent reader, enlarged his repertoire interestingly.

to John White

IMPROMPTU

sur le chorale de Luther
'Un fort rempart est notre Dieu'

Charles Valentin Alkan (1813-88)

Op 69 (c.1869)

transcribed for 2 pianos (from the original for pedal-piano / pedalier) by

Roger Smalley

(1982)

The Society hopes to include the transcription in due course within its publication series (see page 25 of this issue), provided appropriate permissions can be obtained.

¹ Smith, R. (1987). *Alkan: The Music*. Kahn & Averill: London (p. 233).

² Quoted in Smith (op. cit.)

³ The CD is reviewed in *Society Bulletin* 83, p3 (www.alkansociety.org/Bulletin83.pdf)

Alkan, the ‘orchestral’ piano and Concerto for Piano Solo (*Homage to Alkan*)

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This essay incorporates elements from my undergraduate dissertation The Context of Charles Valentin Alkan (Morhange) and his music (University of Durham, 1991) and the preface to the published score of my Concerto for Piano Solo (Homage to Alkan) (Composers Edition, 2015).

I first encountered the music of Alkan as a teenager. Having for a while frequented the public Music and Drama library in my home town, Reading, in search of new scores – mainly of piano music – I was dimly aware of some archaic-looking tomes of his music lurking on the top shelf between Albeniz and ‘Light Modern Piano Pieces’, to which I paid scant attention. (The dryly off-putting title ‘12 studies in minor keys’ hardly helped.) Only when I happened upon Norman Demuth’s book *French Piano Music* was my interest sufficiently aroused to reach for those buff-coloured volumes, alerted by the following passage: ‘Amongst Alkan’s most interesting works are ...“12 Etudes dans les tons majeurs” and another set in “Les tons mineurs”. In the set...in the minor, three of the grandest conceptions in the literature can be found – a “Symphony” in four movements, a “Concerto” for solo piano in three, and a graphic set of variations, *Le Festin d’Esope*. Alkan contrives to give an orchestral effect in the “Symphony”; in the “Concerto” the writing is of two kinds, conveying the impression that an orchestra is playing with the soloist’.¹

Already interested in ‘orchestral’ piano writing, I was electrified by the delectable but outrageous idea of a concerto for piano solo, and immediately sought to unlock the secrets imprisoned within those forbidding hardback façades. Brushing off the metaphorical layer of dust, my eyes fell upon the pages of Alkan’s Concerto for Piano Solo (op.39 nos 8-10). I was astonished, astounded, transfixed. In those copious pages of antique engraving a whole undreamed-of world of possibility was revealed to me.

The Op.39 Concerto is the *ne plus ultra* of what I consider Alkan’s most distinctive approach to piano writing: the evocation of other instruments/sounds, or combinations thereof: ultimately, the full orchestra – and even more ultimately, the full orchestra plus the piano sound ‘itself’. The ‘orchestral’ style of keyboard writing can be traced back at least as far as Bach’s Italian Concerto (1735), although this solo concertante piece implies a monophonic solo instrument playing with the baroque keyboard ‘orchestra’ rather than a keyboard one. Following Bach’s lead, in his piano sonatas Mozart conjures up aural images of a variety of Classical ensembles, including the orchestra, through dipping into the 18th-century’s pool of rhetorical ‘topics’ (the Mannheim rocket; the ‘brilliant’ style), which contemporaneous audiences would have understood as referring to other instrumental sounds (or activities such as dancing, hunting, marching etc.). In part of his B♭ major sonata K333, Mozart even evokes a Classical piano concerto on solo keyboard, with orchestral *ritornello* (culminating in the obligatory 6-4 chord) and solo piano cadenza.

The range and polyphonic nature of keyboard instruments has always facilitated their reproduction of music otherwise only performable by ensembles of instruments and/or singers. From the rise in the early 19th century of opera vocal scores and solo or duet transcriptions of orchestral music, purely functional renditions of various ensemble textures on the piano became, in Ronald Smith’s words: ‘an industry relying on a treadmill of routine formulae to provide a crude realisation of the original textures.’ However (Smith continues), ‘Liszt swept all this aside in 1833 with his monumental transcription of Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*.’²

Original orchestrally-conceived piano music, then, has a context in both functional realisations and a more creative approach associated with Liszt’s transcriptions and later (in response?) Alkan in his own published arrangements (his solo adaptations of Mozart and Beethoven piano concertos can be seen as particularly significant in this regard, paving the way for his later original work in this form). As Isidor Phillip noted,³ Alkan took the idea of the ‘orchestral’ piano to a further extreme than any other 19th-century composer, Liszt and Schumann included. Schumann’s *Concert sans orchestra* (1836), sometimes cited as a precedent for Alkan’s unaccompanied concerto, was (sub-)titled thus by his publisher after

¹ *French Piano Music – A Survey with Notes on its Performance*, London, 1959, p.31.

² *Alkan Volume Two: The Music*, London & New York, 1987, p.172.

³ Preface to *French Piano Music: An Anthology*, New York, 1977.

the piece was written; and the experience of the music is more like the solo part of a piano concerto played on its own than a genuinely concertante sound. In this latter regard it could be seen more as a precedent for Sorabji's *Concerto per suonare da me solo* (1946), whose score annotations suggest the heroics of an *unaccompanied* soloist subjected to the almost Satiesque thoughts of a *silent orchestra* – 'orchestra tacita e tacente', as the score's subtitle has it (although Jonathan Powell identifies an 'orchestral tutti' style within the piece – see below).

How is such evocation achieved? That is: why does the piano have this unique suggestive power, and how is it written into some of its repertoire? Alkan himself noted that both the mechanism of the piano and the technique of playing it, as they had developed within his own time, were such as to allow slight differences in touch and articulation (as well as varied deployment of the two pedals) to create subtle but discernable differences in tone quality: 'those effects, timbres and "illusions" of voices and instruments in their innumerable combinations that are made possible by the peculiar sonorities of the modern piano.'⁴ Imitative directions can indeed be found scattered through piano literature from the 19th century onwards, especially in Alkan's works (the op.39 Concerto is the location of some obvious examples: *quasi-trombe* and *quasi-tamburo* in the first movement; *quasi-celli* in the second and the more exotic *quasi-ribeche* in the third).

References to this aspect of piano scoring and performance are rather scattered and not common in the literature, other than in discussions of music by Alkan and his contemporaries (including Alkan's own texts). Raymond Lewenthal addresses it in relation to Alkan's music,⁵ while in a more mainstream context Alfred Brendel has made a notable contribution with regard to the performance of Liszt's transcriptions.⁶ From a less high-minded and more practically anecdotal angle comes Jenna Simeonov's tips for operatic repetiteurs playing functional piano reductions at the blog www.schmopera.com.⁷ In such texts we find some detailed and specific suggestions for how pianists might evoke, through the balancing, articulation and phrasing of chordal passages, for instance,⁸ the sounds of individual orchestral instruments (Brendel), or various combinations such as strings and winds (Brendel; Simeonov). Full orchestral effects are often 'composed in', as with Mozart's 'topics' (see also below), but performatively the richness of an orchestral texture is frequently achieved through extensive recourse to the sustaining pedal; an orchestral hush might be invoked by the soft pedal, or both pedals together (Alkan sometimes calls for *due ped.* in the context of orchestral evocation: for instance in op. 39's *Ouverture* and the third movement of the *Symphonie*).

At the level of scoring, Alkan himself recommends (in the essay previously cited) the use of intangible judgements reliant primarily on 'tact' and intelligence in determining registration: 'how to combine the chords in a particular way'; '...to write some part or other at this octave rather than that' and dynamics: 'to emphasise this, to lighten that', with the overall aim 'to use a thousand ingenious methods to arrive not at a mathematical similarity, but a faithful, relative, moral one'. He concludes with an argument for combining serendipitous judgement with a systematic approach: this art of evocation 'must have its rules, i.e. those formulae which everyone can use, but which, without the necessary insight, must remain useless.'⁹

Orchestral evocation can be achieved on the piano through symbolic associations. For instance, exact keyboard translations of Classical orchestral textures will often result in octave doublings (replicating cellos and basses, or first and second violins). Even though when transferred to the piano this doesn't sound like an orchestra in the literal sense, listeners may accept it as such by association, both through the added power and resonance, and potentially, through experience of piano arrangements whose original versions are known.

Octave doubling aside, the symbolic formula perhaps most familiar from pianistic evocations of the orchestra is tremolando. This is symbolic rather than literal because, while orchestral strings tremble through note repetition, the piano trembles most commonly and idiomatically through octave or

⁴ Introduction to *Souvenirs des concerts du Conservatoire*, first series, translated in *Alkan Volume Two: The Music* (p.175).

⁵ See 'Alkan's Treatment Of The Piano' in *The Piano Music of Alkan*, New York/London, 1964, pp.IX-X. For instance: 'With octaves there are three "registrations" possible: top note predominating, lower note predominating, both equal....Alkan cries out for this approach and to play him well you must orchestrate on the piano' (X).

⁶ In *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts* ('Liszt'), London, 1976.

⁷ See the post 'Pianists: 3 tips for sounding like an orchestra' (26 September 2015).

⁸ Alkan himself also recommends 'the intelligent use of certain fingerings, hand-crossing etc.' (op. cit.)

⁹ Op.cit.

chordal alternation, as Simeonov attests.¹⁰ Harold Truscott has discussed this in a specifically Alkanian context. He argues for tremolando as an idiomatically pianistic device, which while an aesthetically inadequate substitute for string tremolo in functional arrangements becomes poetically suggestive in the first movement of Alkan's Concerto:

the one thing that stands out from the rest, as a piano sound in that large opening passage, is the use of the right hand tremolando. This again, while it suggests a vague orchestral connection, is kept securely to the keyboard because it is high up in the treble of the piano. Normally if a piano tremolando is to be used in a piano arrangement of an orchestral work, it is heard in the lower part of the keyboard. Alkan's is in fact high in pitch so that he secures for these bars a vague orchestral suggestion, without compromising the pianism of the device. Only the piano could give us the sound that comes from these bars which is right for the music and is no substitute for anything else.¹¹

An example, perhaps, of where Alkan has sought a 'relative, moral' orchestral suggestion in preference to a 'mathematical' one.

Going beyond symbolic formulae, whether inadequate or impressive, Jonathan Powell identifies some characteristics of the 'orchestral tutti' piano style common to both Alkan and Sorabji's solo piano concertos: such passages, he finds, 'often employ diatonic chordal writing in both hands...moving consecutively, while others simulate orchestral sonority by using many registers of the instrument simultaneously.'¹² Repeated chords are a further characteristic identified through comparison with another (much shorter) solo concertante piano work by John White, Sonata no 152 (2006); this feature takes us all the way back to Bach's Italian Concerto.

The deployment of different registers of the piano simultaneously (whether as an achievable texture or an aural illusion) is facilitated greatly by the sustaining pedal and its resonance; a texture found in many works by Sorabji and Finnis, not least Sorabji's solo concerto and Finnis's solo Piano Concerto No 4 (1978/96). Yet there's a sense in which registration and pedalling can be used to create textures which are more than the sum of their parts. Olivier Messiaen perhaps had this in mind when observing, during a discussion of his own epic piano cycle *Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jésus* (the score of which is replete with suggestions of orchestral instrumental sounds), that 'it is possible to produce on the piano sounds which are more orchestral than those of the orchestra.'¹³ Smith touched on this – while also chiming with Truscott's later point above – in his discussion of Alkan's piano *Symphonie*: 'His unique keyboard sonorities are deliberately orchestral but untranslatable. Their effect is the result of a subtle illusion rooted in the very nature of the piano and its evocative power.' Both Smith and Truscott echo Sorabji, who wrote of Alkan's 'manner of writing for the keyboard that may best be termed a sort of pianistic orchestration, it is orchestration *in terms of the piano*',¹⁴ and commented that in the *Symphonie*: 'The feeling and treatment is thoroughly symphonic, yet superbly adapted to the exigencies of the instrument.'¹⁵

Truscott cites another example of scoring which seems more orchestral than an orchestra, again from the first movement of op.39/8:

My final point comes from the huge coda of the movement. It illustrates Alkan's grasp of the piano for purposes of orchestral suggestion in yet a different, and perhaps the ultimate way. The passage begins with a low, quiet, rumbling shake, and against this, at the extreme upper end of the keyboard, chords staccato and just on the borderline of audibility. This is already a remarkable suggestion, but...he allows the volume to grow gradually, without changing the extremes of height and depth of pitch, by increasing volume and intensity and...filling the intervening space, almost the whole of the keyboard with rumbling echoes, and

¹⁰ www.schmopera.com/pianists-3-tips-for-sounding-like-an-orchestra/2. String tremolos

¹¹ 'Why Alkan's music is so pianistic', talk for the Alkan Society at the Thomas Coram Foundation, 8 December 1986, published in the *Alkan Society Bulletin No 31* (January 1987), p.4.

¹² 'Charles-Valentin Alkan and British piano music of the 20th century and beyond', *Alkan Society Bulletin No 90* (January 2014), p.17.

¹³ Roger Nichols, *Messiaen* (2nd edition), Oxford, 1986, p.37.

¹⁴ *The New Age*, 27 January 1937; cited in 'Charles-Valentin Alkan and British piano music of the 20th century and beyond', op.cit.

¹⁵ 'Charles Henri Victorin Morhange (Alkan)', *Around Music*, London, 1932, p.218. Similar sentiments were expressed in a letter to me from pianist Peter Donohoe, in response to a suggestion of mine that I might orchestrate Alkan's solo concerto (unaware this had already been done by Mark Starr and Karl Klindworth): 'It has always seemed to me to be one of the fundamental aspects of the piece that the symphonic scale (including the inherent combative nature of the traditional concerto) is forced to be contained within the limitations created by being performable on solo piano alone. Orchestrating it seems to me, therefore, to be rather futile – similar to doing the same to...Messiaen's *Vingt Regards*.' (30 August 1988) I did indeed abandon my orchestration attempts.

from the single notes in the bass he adds just one to make an octave. So that from what appears on the page to be tiny, quite inadequate means, he obtains an earfilling crescendo to lead to the chordal theme from the orchestra's initial tutti, the volume at full pelt.¹⁶

Earlier in the coda – which I hear as both solo and tutti; the ‘orchestra’ playing together with the piano – the starkness of the repeated notes, octaves and chords on the page is similarly at odds with the rich and full texture experienced by the listener in performance: the illusion of sustained harmonies and the effect of multiple registers at play simultaneously, which is certainly facilitated by the resonance of the pedal yet seems to go beyond this mechanical, mathematical phenomenon in an intangible, almost magical way.

My own *Concerto for piano solo (Homage to Alkan)* starts with these two intersecting contexts: the legacy of Alkan, and the broader tradition of orchestral evocation on the piano – including the much narrower solo piano concerto genre.¹⁷ Completed in 2013 (the initial premiere performances in Alkan's bicentenary year)/2014 (the definitive score), the work has a long genesis, with some ideas dating back to my discovery of Alkan and undergraduate music studies in the late 1980s. Certain specific orchestral suggestions (strings, solo flute, harp, bassoons, brass) were inspired by Brendel's imaginative solutions for achieving them. For instance, of string imitation Brendel writes: ‘Characteristic of the string sound is a wide, easily variable dynamic range, a legato supported by pedal vibrations, a tender onset of the notes.... Bass entries may be anticipated. Cellos and double basses need time in which to unfold their sound. Pizzicato chords may be lightly broken; they are plucked away from the keys. Muted string passages of course require soft-peddaling.’¹⁸ And of the horn: ‘The noble, full, somewhat veiled, “romantic” sound of the horn demands a loose arm and a flexible wrist. Although its dynamics extend from *pp* to *f*, the sordino pedal should always be used. In legato, every note is put down separately and connected with its neighbours by pedal alone. The staccato is never pointed. In chords played by several horns, the upper voice must recede slightly in favour of the lower ones.’¹⁹ Thus Brendel's texts inform elements of my score, primarily performance directions.

As for Alkanian influences: these range from subtle suggestions (for instance a sparse three-part canon in octaves alludes to the pedal-point from the middle of Alkan's *Concerto* first movement, which I think of in terms of Eliot's ‘still point of a turning world’), through clearer but non-specific references (e.g., to Alkan's favoured march and fanfare topics) to short snippets of direct quotation: from the *Scherzo Diabolico* and *Symphonie* (both from the magnum *opus* 39). The opening bar of my concerto quotes from the closing passage of Alkan's *Symphonie* first movement; in a sense, it starts where Alkan's symphonic movement leaves off.

Cast in four movements (but played *attacca*), the third is a *danza alla barbaresca* in response to Alkan's op.39/10. Throughout the work I have followed Alkan in indicating the alternation of the piano soloist and the illusory orchestra; unlike him, I also indicate where a combination of the two is intended to be evoked (although at times in his work this intention is clearly implied). Also unlike Alkan – but perhaps as a way of extending his aesthetic in a contemporary way – I have introduced an element of indeterminacy in the cadenza between movement III and the *toccata finale*, which is to be prepared or improvised in response to graphic-score elements.²⁰

The long gestation of the work makes it a kind of compositional autobiography, taking in a long-term interest in the various ways – conventional and extended – of conveying musical material via the medium of the piano; from the intricate manipulation of decorative motifs to a (relatively recent) concern with a more raw and visceral expression. Concerns which were not unknown, of course, to Alkan himself.

A recording of Concerto for Piano Solo (Homage to Alkan), performed by Gabriel Keen, was released by Sargasso Records in September 2017 as part of the album Living Stones (SCD28081). See page 24 of this issue for a reflection on the CD.

¹⁶ Op. cit. (p.5)

¹⁷ Jonathan Powell surveys contributions from British composers to this rarified genre in the article previously cited. Some other examples may be found in the Wikipedia entry ‘Concerto for solo piano’.

¹⁸ Op. cit. (p.95)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Having said this is unlike Alkan, the distinctive appearance of his printed editions was identified by Sorabji, who remarked on ‘the extraordinary original appearance of the music, as of an entirely novel and unfamiliar system of decorative design’ (‘Charles Morhange’, *Around Music*, London, 1932, p.214). Raymond Lewenthal also noted this feature in his edited selection, *The Piano Music Of Alkan* (New York/London, 1964, p.VIII).

A tour of Alkan's residences in Paris

Nick Hammond (treasurer@alkansociety.org)

Back in February, my wife and I took a long weekend break in Paris, and we dedicated a day to visiting on foot as many as possible of Alkan's residences, or at least as many as I knew about at the time.

My initial research, prior to the trip, was somewhat sketchy and involved, in addition to perusing the well-known Alkan texts (Smith, Eddie), reference to the informative Simeone's *Paris – a Musical Gazetteer*¹ and a variety of web sources². This generated a seemingly plausible list of locations and associated dates; however subsequent investigations revealed this to be incomplete, and in one or two cases inaccurate. For my further research I looked for dates and addresses on facsimiles or transcripts of Alkan's letters (principally to Fétis and to Santiago de Masarnau) that are available on the web³. These provided additional entries and some corrections to my original list. In addition, I corresponded with François Luguenot of the Société Alkan (FL in the table below), who provided much helpful additional information, for which I am most grateful. Finally, Richard Shaw, who reviewed a draft of this article, kindly provided further source information from his own research (RS in table).

My updated list is as follows:

Year	Address	Key	Notes and key source of evidence
Birth	1 rue de Braque	1	Multiple, including birth certificate
1824	10 rue Simon-le-Franc	2	Move of family home; Personal communication FL; at this address in 1826, Personal communication RS
1827	6 rue du Renard (près la rue St Merri)	3	FL; & RS (letter from CVA's father)
1834-37	29 rue des Blancs Manteaux (in father's music school). Also sometimes at no 20	4	Multiple, including letter to de Masarnau (1 Sept 1834) FL
1835	Rented apartment (Biscop)	5	<i>chez M. Pahin à Biscop</i> . Letter to de Masarnau
1837	40 rue Saint Lazare	6	FL; RS (marriage certificate of CVA's sister Celeste, 14 Sep '37)
1845-48	34 rue Saint Lazare	7	Multiple letters
1848	36 rue Saint Lazare	8	Letters to de Masarnau (15 Nov '48; 29 Mar '50); Letter to George Sand (10 Aug '48 – <i>Bulletin de la Société</i> 17)
1851-52	64 rue d'Amsterdam	9	Multiple
1852-	11 rue la Bruyère	10	Letter to Fétis (Oct 1852)
1854-58	51 rue de Londres	11	Letters to de Masarnau (16 Aug '54; 22 Jul '56); RS Legal document (<i>Succession</i>) re death of CVA's father (12 Jun '55)
1858-63	36 rue de Lisbonne	12	Letter to Fétis (31 Oct 1858)
1863	23 rue Croix-du-Roule	13	FL. Note: rue Croix-du-Roule was renamed rue Daru, 1867
1865	36 rue de Lisbonne	14	FL
1868	23 rue Daru	15	Letters to de Masarnau (11 Oct '68; 27 Aug '69; 15 Mar & 5 May '70; 3 Aug '70; 13 Mar & 24 Oct '71); RS Legal doc re death of CVA's mother (13 Apr '68)
1872-88	29 rue Daru	16	Visited by de Bertha, "early 1872"; Letters to de Masarnau (6 Feb, 16 May, 1 Aug & 3 Nov 1874)
1888		17	Grave in Cimetière de Montmartre

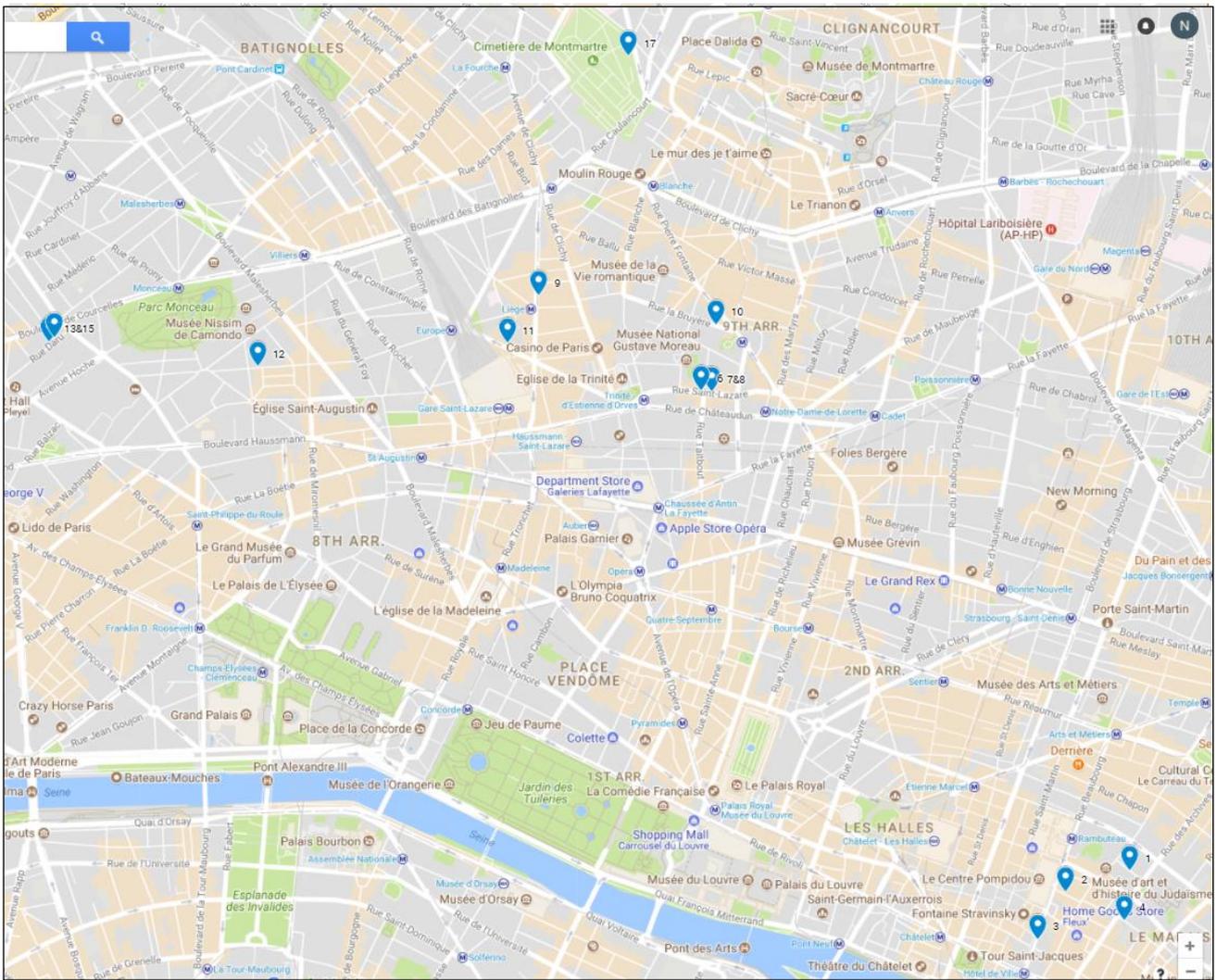
The column headed *Key* refers to the locations on the map on the next page, indicated by the blue "map pins". The number close to the pin corresponds to the key. It is clear that during his childhood and youth he lived in the *Marais* area of Paris (locations 1-4, in the south-east corner of the map), from 1837 he lived in a relatively restricted area of North Paris. Larger scale maps of these two areas are also shown on the next two pages, the first with locations 1-4, the second with 6-17⁴.

¹ Simeone, N. (2000). *Paris -- a Musical Gazetteer*. Yale University Press ISBN-13: 978-0300080544.

² The most informative being Jacques-Philippe Saint-Gérard, *Charles-Valentin Alkan et le second Empire*, with a summary table at: <http://projects.chass.utoronto.ca/langueXIX/musique/alkan-chronologie.htm>

³ The letters to Santiago de Masarnau are available in digital format from *El Portal de Archivos Españoles*, at <http://pares.mcu.es/>

⁴ The author can provide clearer enlarged maps on request



Location 5 (the residence of M. Pahin) is outside Paris and so is not included⁵. For those not wishing to visit the locations on foot, many are close to stops on the Paris Métro.

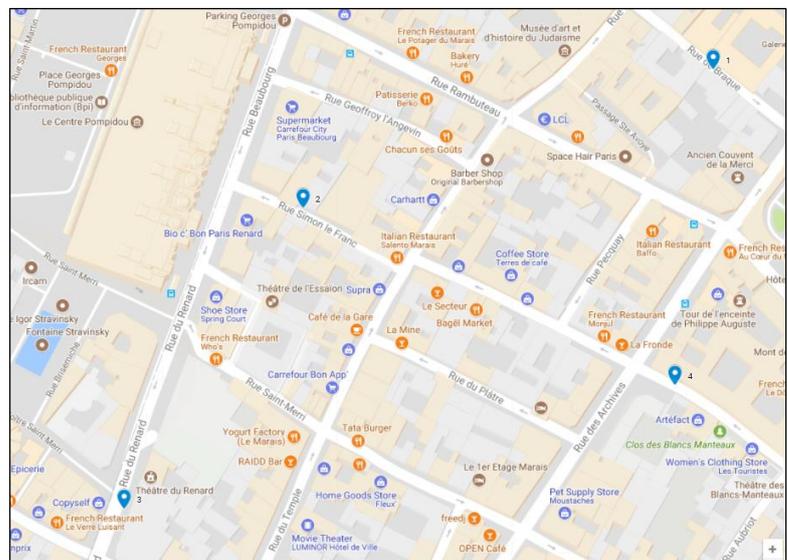
Whilst many walking routes are feasible, we started at the *Cimetière de Montmartre* (nearest métro stops *Blanche* and *Place de Clichy*), and then, in approximate reverse chronological order, took in *rue Daru*, worked eastwards, and then cut down to *Le Marais* (with a number of *pâtisserie* stops en route). Cafes and other eateries are plentiful, and the residential buildings in the area are never less than elegant.

The buildings themselves

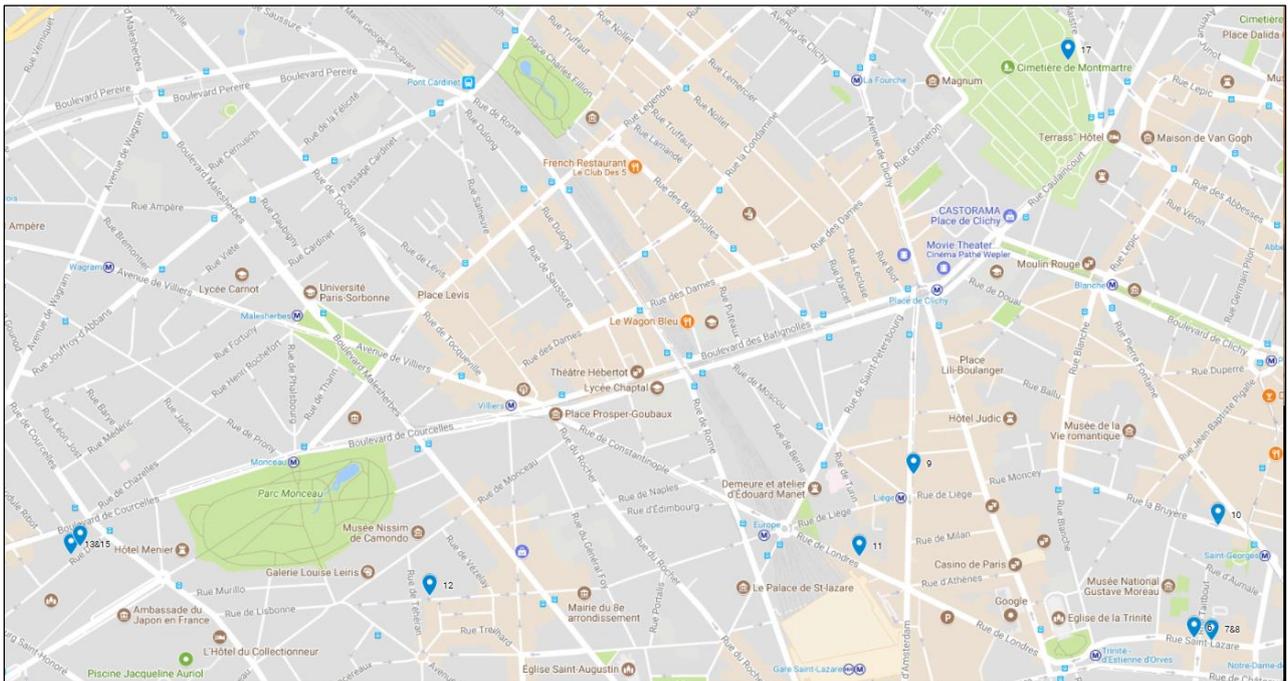
The notes that follow are in the order of the table above.

The current building of which 1 *rue de Braque* is a part is a fine edifice, but with a plaque inscribed *Tardif-Delome, Architecte, 1877*, so post-dates Alkan's birth. Almost opposite (on *rue des Archives*) is the impressive medieval gateway to the grand *Hôtel de Soubise*. Nowadays, the building behind houses the *Musée de l'Histoire de France* and a part of the *French National Archives*.

We did not visit 10 *rue Simon-le-Franc* (missed from my initial research), but



⁵ Piscop is located 1km north of Saint-Brice-sous-Forêt, about 20km north of Paris



an image from Google street view reveals a fine doorway to no. 10 in a rather narrow and run-down street. Similarly, we failed to visit 6 rue de Renard, although Google shows a much more open street with a fine seven-storey apartment building – on which can just be made out A. Garriguenc, Architecte, 1908 – so the building again post-dates Alkan’s time. The current 29 rue des Blancs Manteaux, again a fine block, was rebuilt in 1885.

When living in rue Lazare, Alkan was a neighbour of Chopin at 9 Square d’Orléans (from 1842 until his death in 1849). Numbers 34 and 36 in rue Lazare do indeed back onto the Square, and one of these properties may have been renamed from 10 Square d’Orléans. Current appearances are misleading, as the area underwent major changes in the 1850s: *Une Maison dite square d’Orléans comprend les nos 28, 34 et 36; les nos 40 et 42 ont été démolis avant 1852 pour former le 81 de la rue Taitbout à l’angle de la rue Saint-Lazare, le 78 rue Taitbout devenant alors l’entrée du square d’Orléans*⁶. Many celebrated artists and performers lived in the Square, and Léon Escudier wrote that in the 1830s: *Le square était une petite Athènes*⁷.

The current building at 64 rue d’Amsterdam, again an elegant apartment block, was constructed between 1875 and 1880 (personal communication, RS).

The house at 11 rue la Bruyère is interestingly situated between houses of different styles on either side (picture on right – no 11 is the house with the arched pediment above the door). This may well be the house occupied by Alkan.

Nowadays, 51 rue de Londres is very close to the Gare Saint-Lazare, although when it opened in 1837 (and presumably during Alkan’s residence) the station was 200 metres north-west of its current position. At the time of our visit, the house was covered in scaffolding and under refurbishment into a “complex of offices”. The properties are certainly imposing, as seen in the picture on the top left of the next page (no 51 is to the right of the lamp post, masked by the temporary staircase), and these may well be the original buildings as the road was only cut in 1826, with house construction thereafter.

The building at 36 rue de Lisbonne has also been re-built since Alkan’s time, in about 1869 (personal communication, RS).



⁶ François-Sappey, B. (1991). *Charles Valentin Alkan*. Fayard: Paris, pp 307-308.

⁷ Léon Escudier (1868). *Mes Souvenirs. Les Virtuoses*. Paris. In Ch XIII



In *rue Daru* (previously *rue Croix-de-Roule*), the odd-numbered buildings run from 19 directly to 27, with only a couple of drainpipes intervening. There is no sign of 23 *rue Daru* (nor for that matter of numbers 21 or 25). Number 29 (pictured below) is a different matter: the building, unlike its neighbours, has unusual brick and stone facing with external window shutters. This is the house where Alkan died.

The oddity of the numbering raises the possibility that the two addresses used by Alkan, numbers 23 and 29, were in fact the same property but the numbers were changed while he was in residence. The report by Alexandre de Bertha⁸ on visiting Alkan early in 1872 at no 29 (the year of his “move” to no 29) makes more sense if we assume that Alkan had not actually moved house. De Bertha describes various seemingly established arrangements: *he had two [apartments], so as not to be troubled by the noise*



of the neighbours: one on the first floor where he slept and worked and the other above, providing a dressing room, library and store room. (...) At his front door he had a doorbell of three bells tuned to C, E and G intended to please visitors, but somewhat scary in its din. At the time of my visit, it no longer existed (my translation). This is hardly the description of new household; I leave further investigation to others.

All in all, walking round this part of Paris, in many respects unchanged since the mid-19th Century, gives a strong feel for the cultivated and elegant environment of the time. Whether or not I have been accurate in my identification of the specific buildings where Alkan lived, it does seem that he was able to afford agreeable accommodation in a convenient and cultured area of the city.

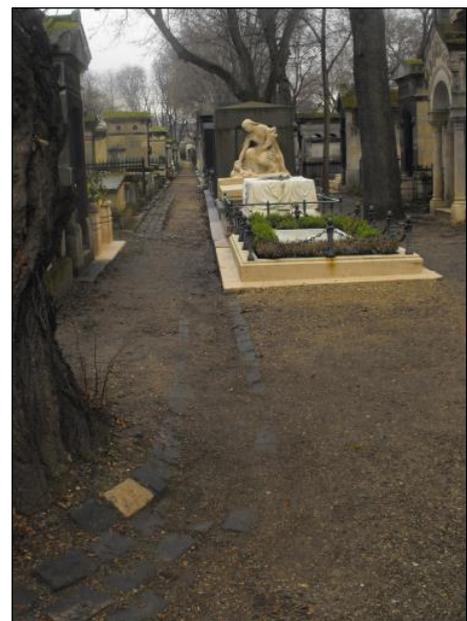
Alkan's grave

Locating Alkan's grave in the *Cimetière de Montmartre* is no easy matter. From the main entrance to the Cemetery in *Avenue Rachel*, proceed to the large grassy roundabout and take the track immediately opposite (*Avenue Dubuisson*), with the viaduct on your right. Turn left onto *Avenue Hector Berlioz* (Berlioz's grandiose tomb is on your left), and almost immediately, where the Avenue forks, take the right turn into *Chemin Halevy*, which swings left and divides into two paths on either side of a row of tombs (pictured right). Take the left path. Alkan's tomb, of grey flecked granite, is towards the



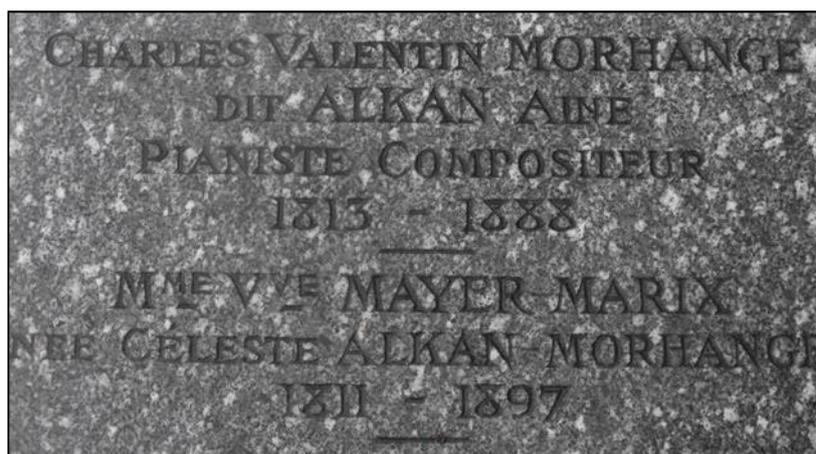
end of this path, low down on the right.

The inscription informs us that his sister Céleste, who outlived him, is buried with him in the same grave.



⁸ de Bertha (1909). *CH. Valentin Alkan aîné, Étude Psycho-musicale* (see www.musicologie.org/Biographies/alkan_c_v.html)

The tomb itself, pictured below, was restored in 1990 by the same firm of masons who constructed the original⁹. The cost of the restoration was 20,000 French Francs (at least €5,000 in today's money). The tomb is made from grey Tarn granite from the south-west of the Massif Central area of France.



Members are encouraged to send letters, comments or articles to the Editor
(Nick Hammond, treasurer@alkansociety.org, or by post to: The Alkan Society,
Woodend House, High Stittenham, York YO60 7TW, UK)

⁹ There is a short report of the restoration in *Société Alkan Bulletin 16*, p. 8

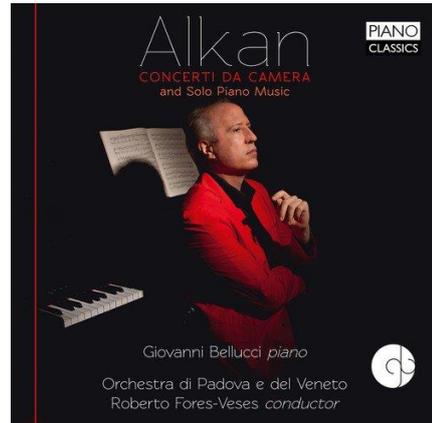
CD reviews

Alkan: Concerti da Camera and solo piano music

Giovanni Bellucci (piano) with Roberto Fores-Veses (conductor) and Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto

Piano Classics PCL10135, released October 2017, length 71 minutes

¹ Concerto da Camera in A minor (op. 10 no 1)	15'03
1 <i>Allegro</i>	4'56
2 <i>Adagio</i>	3'15
3 <i>Allegro</i>	6'52
Concerto da Camera in C# minor (op. 10 no 2)	8'10
4 <i>Allegro moderato</i>	2'45
5 <i>Adagio</i>	3'43
6 <i>Primo movimento</i>	1'42
Concerto da Camera in C# minor (op. 10 no 3)	5'48
7 <i>Andante con moto</i>	5'48
Six piano pieces (op. 16)	41'26
8 No 1: <i>Etude de bravoure, Mouvement de Valse</i>	6'57
9 No 2: <i>Etude de bravoure, Moderato quasi Menuetto</i>	6'10
10 No 3: <i>Etude de bravoure, Prestissimo</i>	6'58
11 No4: <i>Variations on "Ah! Segnata é la mia Morte", from the opera "Anna Bolena" by Donizetti</i>	7'17
12 No 5: <i>Variations on a theme by Bellini "La tremenda ultrice spade" from "I Capuleti e i Montecchi"</i>	7'01
13 No 6: <i>Variations quasi-fantasy on a Neapolitan barcarolle</i>	7'03



Reflections by Mark Viner

It goes without saying that Bellucci is an idiosyncratic musician but one, nevertheless, with undeniable communicative powers. Whatever he touches bristles with a vital sense of immediacy and is imbued with character – character, however, which doesn't always pass entirely without question.

Regarding the disk itself, the track list raises some serious questions. The somewhat odd choice of works presented here includes the two *Concerti da camera*, and *Andante avec sourdines*, the *Trois Etudes de bravoure* (Scherzi), op.16, and the three relatively unimportant variation sets also published as op.16 and grouped as nos. 4-6. The three works for piano and orchestra/strings are all listed erroneously as op.10 – it was only the first that ever actually bore this *opus* number. Perhaps the biggest blunder is in that the *Andante avec sourdines*, based on the second of the *Trois Andantes romantiques*, op.13, is listed as *Concerto da camera*, op.10 no.3 – all more the pity as, in fact, this is the world première recording of the lost *Andante avec sourdines* with which Alkan once held his Paris audiences in sway. There is no mention of this anywhere, however; only a note below the item in the booklet to say that it has been 'reconstructed' by François Luguenot. I am only aware that this arrangement is, indeed, Alkan's original from having kindly been sent copies of a complete set of MS parts (albeit in a copyist's hand) by M. Luguenot himself, together with a full score constructed by the latter, to assist with the impending publications project the Society is undertaking. So, in short, there has clearly been some mix-up here and, possibly, some missed opportunities.

All three works for piano and orchestra/strings are finely recorded; and indeed, to my ears, seem to have been recorded as chamber works – these are, after all, *da camera* – highlighting Alkan's idiosyncrasies as an orchestrator. Textures, and even melodic lines, previously drowned out in other recordings appear in relief against the often chunky piano writing. In many respects, the first two tracks, the two *Concerti da camera*, are the finest on the disk – the 'middle movement' of the first offering some deeply communicative playing. Perhaps my biggest reservations come with the *Andante avec sourdines* and onwards. Call me old-fashioned but I like to hear what a composer actually wrote: here we have not merely niggling *rubati*, but rhythms distorted to the point they are wrong, actual tempo changes and, at times, a complete loss of sense of pulse. The hypnotism of the trio of the first of the

¹ Information in this summary is as provided on the CD insert

Trois Etudes de bravoure, op.16, marred by a misplaced *rubato*, is lost on him and the ruthless drive of the third of the set emasculated through erratic accents which shouldn't be there.

There is no question that the pianist here is a most interesting artist with a bold command of the instrument but when the eccentricities of the music are upstaged by the eccentricities of the interpreter and one is not able to see the wood for the trees, so to speak, we must take stock of what really matters. These reservations aside, the two *Concerti* have much to offer and are a welcome addition to the discography, not to mention the steadily burgeoning Piano Classics catalogue.

Alkan: Piano Collection 3 (Comme le Vent)

Yui Morishita, piano

ALM Records ALCD-7216, released (in Japan) November 2017, length 70 minutes

Études dans tous les tons mineurs, op. 39	41'15
No 1 <i>Comme le Vent</i>	4'34
No 2 <i>En rythme Molossique</i>	8'12
No 3 <i>Scherzo diabolico</i>	4'38
No 11 <i>Ouverture</i>	14'20
No 12 <i>Le Festin d'Ésope</i>	9'31
Trois morceaux dans le genre pathétique, op. 15	28'05
No 1 <i>Aime-moi</i>	8'44
No 2 <i>Le vent</i>	7'45
No 3 <i>Morte</i>	11'36



Reflections by Richard Murphy

Études dans tous les tons mineurs, Op 39 published 1857

No 1 *Comme le Vent* (A minor)

I'll wager that YM does not use Alkan's printed fingering. This is the fleetest I've heard this study – *assottigliato* (flowing) indeed, and when we reach 00'31, anything that might have stood out in high relief as a melody note has been flattened by this wind – *stacciato* (a term from low-relief carving) – Alkan painting smears of sound. The chopped phrasing at 1'25 is played exactly as written: 11 bars with a two-note cadence, 11½ bars – three-note cadence, 12 bars – four-note, 12½ bars – five-note. The notation does not allow for pauses, and YM almost impossibly achieves this. Few do, even at slower speeds!

The climax (from 3'10) with its vortices of diminished sevenths and one of Alkan's most astringently dissonant 16 bars (of disjunctly resolved split RH ninths) at 3'24 is thrillingly played, and the piece's dissolution is handled with discipline.

No 2 *En rythme Molossique* (D minor)

For a strong feeling of two-beats-in-a-bar, look elsewhere. The unyielding force of this rhythmic 'groove' is missing from the very start because all notes are played equally emphatically. To consciously underplay even the main beats in the bar (00'41) is to deny the engine of this extraordinary rhythmic locomotive its essential fuel. I miss the hypnosis of iron wheels tattooing on sections of rail. The lack of melody projection, previously noticed in op. 39/9¹, is a feature here too (1'15). Does YM listen to vocal music for a model of *cantabile*? The sensitively played RH bridge (2'22-2'39) leads to a disappointingly *non-pp* melody. As a whole, I miss a sense of the dramatic and the threateningly obsessive. [At 6'32, I'm still amused to hear the second bar of Offenbach's famous Barcarolle originally written in 1864 and in identical key, harmony and register.]

No 3 *Scherzo diabolico* (G minor)

The imaginative and dramatic use of Alkan's silences and pauses contribute decisively to the diabolical character asked for in the title. YM has the courage to extend these and surprise the listener (3'15). The

¹ In Morishita's previous Alkan collection (ALCD-7203), reviewed in *Bulletin* 94, pp 20-22

repeat of the opening has a marvellously slammed *pesante* chord in place of a silence (1'01). The contrasting Trio is played to the hilt and reminds me of a parallel characterisation in an earlier piece by Alkan – *Quasi Faust*:

- *Satanique* is the direction at the start of QF – later on the second tune is fat and heavy *fff* chords (which Alkan characterises as *Le Diable*)
- *Diabolicamente* is the direction at the start of SD – later on the second tune is fat and heavy *fff* chords (for which Alkan wrote no character).

After the Trio, Alkan saves the greatest contrast – from *fff* to *ppp* – for the return of the opening material (3'15) which is superbly played. You can actually hear YM fighting to suppress the volume by his re-setting of the *ppp* control at the start of phrases, and the last three pauses are perfectly judged.

No 11 Overture (B minor)

The model of the multi-sectioned 18th century French opera overture is patent – a brilliant string opening, leading to a slower heavily dotted rhythm in growling woodwind in which I wished YM had been more strict with the tempo. The first section would suit the pedalier exactly with its low octave punctuation. Alkan's barcarolle music (3'30-5'33) is ravishingly played, but the massed chords section that follows has every note played with identical literal emphasis and refuses to swagger with its striding LH. It's a pity that so much staccato writing is missed because this piece needs its bombast to be lightened with more varied touch and colour.

No 12 Le Festin d'Ésope (E minor)

Contrary to Alkan's directions, there are many pauses between variations and some rubato within. Variations 17 (4'45) and 18 are faster than ever, but light too; 14 (3'50) and 15 have great rhythmic clarity; 19 (5'15) has no *decrescendos* on the descending blind octaves. There are other well-characterised variations. The concluding passage from 8'25 should – for me – contain the sense of a bewildering and epic journey coming to an end, with strong notes of tragedy. I think it's to do with the 'articulation of climactic harmonic movement being the messenger', not purely the accumulation of sound. It is the latter I sense in this performance (as with a number of others' performances).

Trois morceaux dans le genre pathétique, op. 15 published 1837

No 1 Aime-moi (A flat minor)

This is a romantic piece of sincere personal emotion written in a salmagundi of styles. Alkan seems to be inhaling the same compositional air as were his contemporaries – Chopin, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Berlioz. Though no performance indications are given, YM's performance is convincing from beginning to end.

No 2 Le vent (B minor)

In contrast to its neighbours, this middle piece is concerned with the external aspect of nature, and is an atmospheric study in the playing of chromatic scales and their colouristic possibilities. The performance is a very fine one.

No 3 Morte (E flat minor)

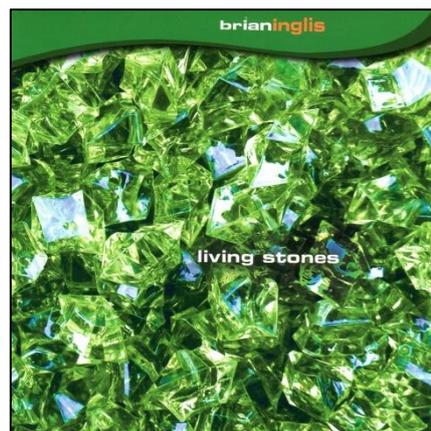
Berlioz comes to mind, not only for the use of *Dies Irae* but also for chattering repeated note accompaniments (woodwind), sudden syncopations, and some complex low register sounds. The language is rhetorically Romantic, blowing very hot, very cold, very slow, very fast. Unlike much in Alkan's later work, there is a great deal of theatrical declamation (in a style that Liszt was making his own), with the use of *tremolo* to highlight an impassioned *recitativo* utterance. I take my hat off to YM for his coherent and touching portrayal of the many characters within.

"The minor key is for sad music." This cliché is undermined by the op. 39 pieces. It possibly has more relevance to Op 15 because the title *...dans le genre pathétique* tells us so, and this is where YM is most musically convincing. *Scherzo diabolico* and *Comme le Vent* are also outstanding.

Brian Inglis: Living Stones
Gabriel Keen and Christopher Scobie, piano
Sargasso SCD28081, released 2017

Wedding	3:18
Kärleks-Vals	2:16
Piano Sonata	10:25
Living Stones	2:23
Passacaglia	3:25
Concerto for Piano Solo (homage to Alkan)	22:00

Reflections by Laura Snyderman



Brian Inglis's *Living Stones* CD, performed by Gabriel Keen and Christopher Scobie, is a collection of pianistic compositions, stemming inspiration from Chopin, Finnissy, Sorabji, and Alkan. The album includes a Chopin-inspired waltz, *Kärleks-Vals*, Inglis's *Piano Sonata*, and, of particular interest to readers of this Bulletin, his *Concerto for Solo Piano (Homage to Alkan)*. These reflections focus on the *Concerto*.

The *Concerto*, played on the CD by Gabriel Keen, is written in four movements, to be played *attacca*. It includes a *danza alla barbaresca* in the third movement, a reflection on Alkan's op. 39/10. The piece employs an aleatoric¹ cadenza between the third and fourth movements, with visual aids used to encourage the performer. Following this cadenza, the piece concludes with a *toccata*, which employs various hand postures and an alignment around a focal tone.

The initial sonority begins on a seven-chord passage, quoting the conclusion of the first movement of Alkan's *Symphonie for Solo Piano*, op. 39/4. Inglis concludes the first movement with a *March funèbre*, alluding to the second movement of Alkan's *Concerto*, op. 39/9. Inglis also marks a *quasi trombe* section, which relates to the opening motif of the Alkan *Concerto*.

The second movement utilizes imitation and dissonance encouraged by Alkan's developmental section in his first movement of his *Concerto*. This is first developed in the canonic section of his *Contrapunctus I*. *Contrapunctus II* utilizes a G-sharp pedal, which can be linked to Alkan's focal point in the centre of the same first movement of his *Concerto*.

On first listen, I gathered a more ostensible inspiration from Finnissy², with the use of disparate range across the keyboard. This range use was more apparent in his more volatile sections. For instance, the concerto displays a spiral image during Inglis's improvisatory cadenza. At this point in the concerto, a faster tempo is enforced with greater contrast and larger chords directed in a circular motion, an artistic choice selected by the performer. In general, his dynamic contrasts and sparsely notated sections display a more contemporary aesthetic than the continuous rhythmic drive and obvious Beethovenian influences in the majority of Alkan's works. The pianist's performance illuminated the Alkan influence, particularly during the bass pedal sections and quick passagework.

Keen rises to the occasion in tackling this challenging concerto, delivering the alternating articulations particularly well. His performance shows clarity and tonal consistency throughout this lengthy Inglis composition.

Brian Inglis writes on Alkan's influence on his work elsewhere in the Bulletin (pp 12-15).

¹ Aleatoric music is "music in which some element of the composition is left to chance, and/or some primary element of a composed work's realization is left to the determination of its performer" (Wikipedia).

² Michael Finnissy is an English composer and pianist who taught at the Royal Academy of Music in London and at the Universities of Sussex and Southampton.

And not quite a review...

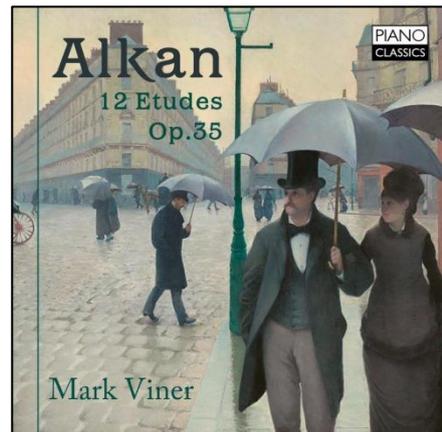
Alkan: Douze Etudes dans tous les tons majeurs (op. 35)

Mark Viner, piano

Piano classics PCL 10127, released November 2017

A preliminary note by Richard Shaw

Clearly I have been good this year, for Father Christmas has just delivered a treat of a CD. I would urge everyone to write to the North Pole, asking for this particular present to be delivered to all deserving (and undeserving) music lovers this Christmas. There are so many fine and interesting things in this recording that I am going to delay my more detailed report for the next Bulletin.



In short, this is a most musical performance of twelve extraordinary pieces. I decline to call them études (studies), suggesting mere repetition of technical patterns for the diligent, ambitious pianist, for as often as not they are powerful character pieces which transcend the limitations of much of the genre. Mark Viner often chooses to make light of the considerable challenges posed, yet in the thunderous *Allegro barbaro* (#5), for example, there is virtuosity aplenty, and in the bizarre yet alluring *L'incendie au village voisin* (Fire in the next village) (#7), drama by the bucket. And as for the stubborn counterpoint and pianistic *tour de force* of *Contrapunctus* (#9)... Bravo!

Alkan Society music publications

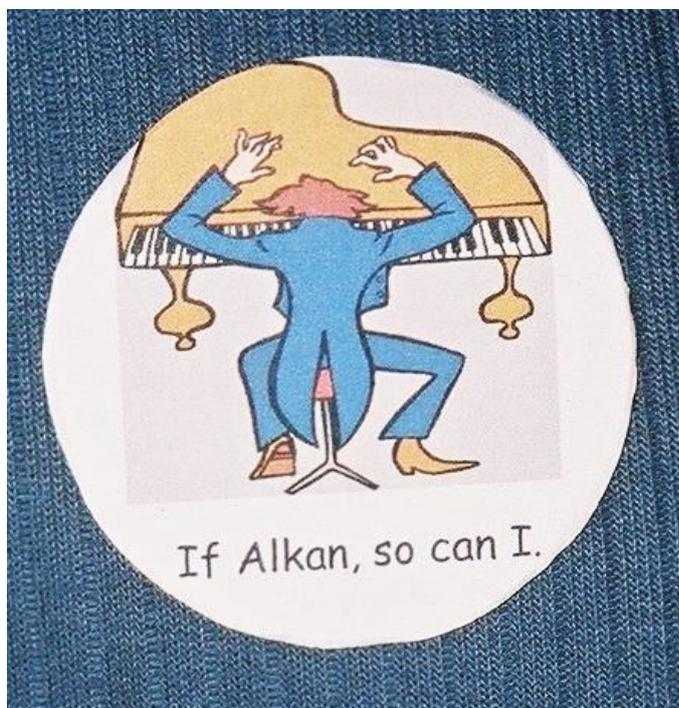
The Society, in collaboration with *La Société Alkan*, has embarked on a venture to publish definitive versions of unavailable or hard-to-obtain works of Alkan. A series of separate volumes is anticipated, which will include works which currently only exist in manuscript form as well as those where the original edition is out of print or hard to obtain. Alkan Society members will enjoy a discount on the list price.

The Series Editor is Mark Viner, advised by an Editorial Board comprising the Canadian pianist and composer Marc-André Hamelin, chairman of *La Société Alkan* François Luguenot and distinguished musicologist Hugh Macdonald.

The first publications will be of Alkan's two *Concerti da Camera* (op. 10) and the *Andante avec sourdines pour piano et quatuor à cordes* (of which op. 13/2 is a version). Alkan's original string parts for the *Andante* have recently been discovered and have not been previously published. We will issue a single volume of two-piano versions of all the three works (that is, solo piano plus orchestral reduction) as well as full scores and orchestral parts for each of the three works separately. Mark Viner is providing the orchestral reductions for op. 10/1 and for the *Andante*; Alkan himself wrote an orchestral reduction of op. 10/2. Preparation of the two-piano versions is well advanced, and publication is expected in 2018.

Distractions and diversions

Alkanian motivation?



Society member Christopher Dyell writes:

A few years have passed since this badge was made, but at the time I was really inspired and full of (op.63 no.9). I attacked the op.39 Concerto as if (op.63 no.45) had taken me over. I practised furiously and thought that I would expire and become as extinct as a (op.63 no.33).

Then reality dawned. "So can I" became "No I Can't". I stormed around the house like a (op.63 no.23), became as sick as Jaco but thankfully not with the same result. Now, relaxed and retired, all I can say is (op.25)

An invitation (again)...

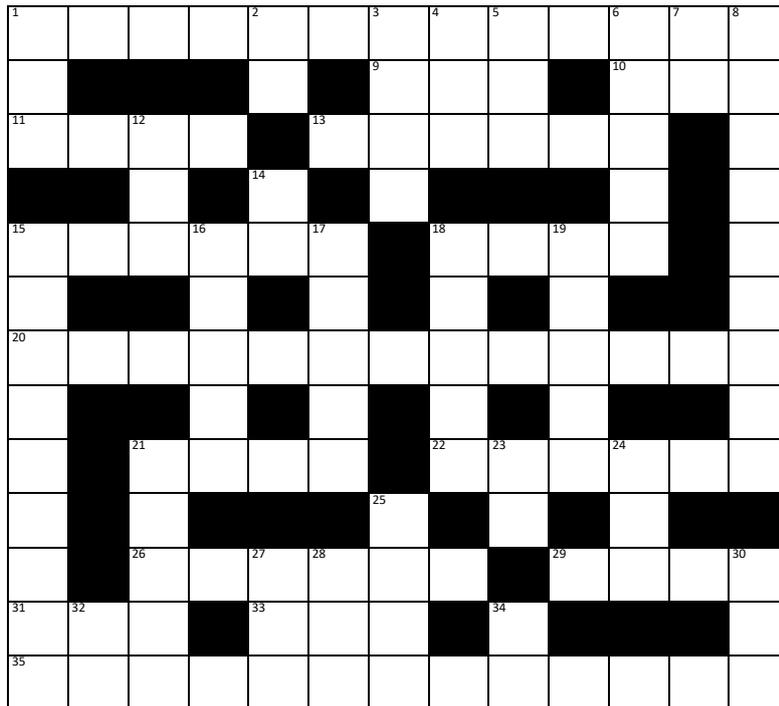
The editor didn't receive any solutions to the puzzle in Bulletin 94, to find at least 50 references to Alkan within the Invitation menu to **Le Festin d'Alkan (as-tu déjeuner déjà?)**, provided by Richard Murphy. We are therefore keeping the puzzle open: the best solution will receive a CD of an **excellent mystery recording**. Please refer to page 28 of the previous Bulletin, issue 94, to see invitation menu. (www.alkansociety.org/Bulletin94.pdf). Email or post your solution to the Editor by Friday 2nd March 2018 (contact details are on the crossword page).

Solution to Prize Crossword number 1 (Bulletin 94)

	1C	2H	3A	4N	5T	6D	7E	8M	9O	10R	11T	
12R		13I		14E		15R		16A		17U		18C
19O	20I	21S		22I	23R	24O	25N	26S	27M	28I	29T	30H
31N				32G		33I		34T		35N		36E
37A	38M	39O	40R	41E		42T	43H	44E	45C	46A	47L	48M
49L		50V				51E		52R		53T		54I
55D	56R	57E	58D	59G	60E		61L	62Y	63D	64I	65A	66N
67S		68R		69R		70A				71O		72D
73M	74A	75P	76P	77I	78N	79G		80B	81I	82N	83G	84E
85I		86I		87L		88R		89E				90F
91T	92O	93T	94A	95L	96M	97E	98S	99S		100E	101Y	102E
103H		104C		105O		106E		107O		108A		109R
	110C	111H	112A	113N	114T	115D	116A	117M	118O	119U	120R	

Congratulations to all members who sent in correct solutions. John Goslin's name was the first drawn from the hat, and he received a CD of the complete Vianna da Motta transcriptions of Alkan's op. 54, op. 64 and op. 66, played by Vincenzo Maltempo and Emanuele Delucchi.

Prize Crossword number 2 (Set by En Songe)



Notes:

- 8 down specifies the theme of the crossword, to which some, but not all, of the clues relate.
- Clues are cryptic, making use of double meanings, anagrams, follow-ons or other such ploys.

Solutions should be sent to the editor* to arrive by Friday 2nd March 2018. The first correct solution (drawn randomly from a hat) will win a choice of either *Volume 1* or *Volume 2* of Kevin Bowyer's collection of Alkan's organ works . Prize donated by *Toccata Classics*.

*To: treasurer@alkansociety.org, or by post to: Nick Hammond, The Alkan Society, Woodend House, High Stittenham, York YO60 7TW, UK

Across

- 1 Deviate, nose up, for an 8 down? Not so innocent (13)
- 9 Not their tailless French bear (3)
- 10, 7 down French step, thanks, for Italian fare (5) (and see 7 down)
- 11 See 29
- 13 Those chattering children in "40 Ans" are certainly a study in these, as is Chopin's 25/8 (6)
- 15, 4 down, 22 across Mobs exhaust loam – this 8 down could be a bit of a clomper? (1'5, 3, 6)
- 18 See 24 down
- 20 Mischievous 8 down? In tabloid, less at either end (3, 10)
- 21, 12 down The uncounted 8 down also due (4, 3)
- 22 See 15 across
- 26 See 32 down
- 29,11 8 down goes to sleep: I, on odd sofa? (4, 4)
- 31 Intoxicant in Valentin? (3)
- 33 It might head for the Sargasso 27 down (3)
- 35 8 down sung by diminutive Venetian? (13)

Down

- 1 Downloaded 16 down lacks actors to hold peas (3)
- 2, 17 Confused max dose to take grades, for example (2, 5)
- 3, 28 Initially, none of Ibert, Satie, Ives, even Rameau is louder (7)

- 4 See 15 across
- 5 See 34 down
- 6 Some quiet place of salts and races (5)
- 7, 10 across Another step behind thanks, for Spanish fare (5) (and see 10 across)
- 8 Courtesy title for head-to-tail French Swiss, for surely more than mere doodles (9)
- 12 See 21 across
- 14 See 23 down
- 15 I call cab, right, for fragrant colourful crustacean? (5, 4)
- 16 Broadcasting, for example, i.e., mad (5)
- 17 See 2 down
- 18 Droops near Berks (5)
- 19 A good soak in print ubiquitously (2, 3)
- 21 Target for op. 15/1? (5)
- 23, 14 Julian label with abbreviated morning for first male, or Giselle melodist (4)
- 24, 18 across Capriciously ham wino? (2, 1, 4)
- 25 Unaccompanied, a feature of several minor studies (4)
- 27 Find the crazed crooner beside here? (3)
- 28 See 3 down
- 30 Look, it sounds like 27 down (3)
- 32, 26 across First 8 down dream? (2, 6)
- 34, 5 Coquette from sunshiny state has muddled slowdown (5)



The Alkan Society

aiming to promote the education of the public in the knowledge,
understanding and appreciation of the life and work of Alkan

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The **Alkan Society**, founded in 1977, is an organization with members from across the globe. It is based in the UK and registered as an official Charity.

The Society promotes the life and work of the French composer and pianist Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813-1888). It supports regular recitals, produces publications (including a regular Bulletin) and is the definitive source of information on Alkan's life and works.



About Alkan

Alkan was recognised by Liszt and Chopin as one of the outstanding musicians of their day. His music has been championed by such eminent performers as Claudio Arrau, Ferruccio Busoni, Jack Gibbons, Marc-André Hamelin, Raymond Lewenthal, John Ogdon, Egon Petri and Ronald Smith.

His works cover a vast gamut of forms, moods and techniques, combining rigorous classicism with bold modernity. His individual use of harmony and rhythm, extraordinary imagination, and uncompromising keyboard writing guarantee his music a unique place in the repertoire, making him one of the great figures of the Romantic era.

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