

# CONTRASTS IN JOHN FIELD RECEPTION: THE PARISIAN 'IMAGES'

*Majella Boland*  
(DUBLIN)

*Every image embodies a way of seeing*<sup>1</sup>.  
John Berger

## INTRODUCTION

John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* examines the role of images in society as they are perceived by the naked eye, as well as the manner in which a society attempts to process these images — through words. Berger posits that «we only see what we look at», but at the same time «we never look at just one thing», which makes clear that there is always a background to whatever, or to whomever is considered. Moreover, images are, for Berger, «man-made», suggesting that «an image is a sight which has been recreated or reproduced. It is an appearance, or a set of appearances, which has been detached from the place and time in which it first made its appearance and preserved — for a few moments or a few centuries»<sup>2</sup>. From a musicological perspective, however, Berger brings to mind other types of images, those created by reception history. Take for instance John Field whose posthumous reception as the instigator of the nocturne has been recreated, reproduced, and preserved to the extent that his contemporary reception is primarily ignored: the disparity between Field's contemporary and posthumous receptions is palpable<sup>3</sup>. On closer inspection, however, contrast is also evident in Field's contemporary reception. In recognition of this are the Parisian 'images' of Field, separated by three decades: in 1802, Field accompanied Clementi to Paris as a successful, yet promising composer and pianist; while in 1832, the Parisian press enthused over Field's return, an enigmatic musical figure, who by then was regarded as a welcome token of the past. To isolate Field as the subject, however, is often to disregard the

---

<sup>1</sup> BERGER, John Peter. *Ways of Seeing*, London, BBC - Penguin Books, 2008 (Penguin book), pp. 13.

<sup>2</sup> P. 2

<sup>3</sup> Field is remembered as the instigator of the nocturne. On closer inspection it is clear that this status is a posthumous construction, primarily because the nocturne and the nocturne style were not unique to Field. Moreover, Field was a pianist/composer whose seven piano concerti were an important part of his public performances. Field's publishing habits demonstrate that he was cognisant of a domestic and public audience, a point that has been disregarded. For more information see BOLAND, Majella. *John Field in Context: a Reappraisal of the Nocturne and Concerto*, Ph.D. Diss., Dublin, University College Dublin, 2013.

significance of his background; and if «we never just look at one thing», as Berger puts it, it is important to question whether these images reveal more about Field, or the development and role of musical life in Paris in the first half of the nineteenth century. The aim of this chapter therefore is threefold: to examine contrast exhibited in the cameos of Field, which were circulated in Paris in the first half of the nineteenth century; to consider what these images reveal about Field reception and musical activity in Paris at that time; and to assess its impact on Field historiography.

### THE PARISIAN IMAGES OF FIELD

In a letter to Pleyel and Co. in 1801, Clementi and Co. offered works for publication by a number of composers including Field: «Sir, we have by us at this time some very valuable manuscripts of Clementi, Dussek, Viotti, Cramer and *Field* (the latter is a pupil of M. Clementi, a very promising genius and already became a great favourite in this country both in respect to composition and performance — it is likely you will soon see him in Paris)»<sup>4</sup>. This introduction to Field implies that he was little known outside of England at the turn of the nineteenth century, while noting that he was firmly established in that country as a composer and pianist. Two reasons underpin this anonymity: first, he was at a relatively early stage in his career, having just completed his apprenticeship with Clementi; and second, Field's audience was overwhelmingly English. In recognition of this are records of thirty-one performances by Field during his residence in London (1793–1802), of which twenty-six were performances of piano concerti. Details from concert programmes are not always provided, but in cases where the concerto in question is not listed, it seems likely that Field performed one by Dussek — it was customary to perform works by contemporaries<sup>5</sup> — or his First Piano Concerto in E flat major, Field's only concerto at that time. This concerto was not published until 1815, and although concerti were arranged for domestic consumption prior to this time, it seems that Field deliberately maintained a distinction between domestic and public music: as Therese Ellsworth remarks, the concerto was «an important device for [...] building a career as [a] concert artist»<sup>6</sup>. Yet, Field was equally aware of his domestic audience, a point which is corroborated by the publication of his shorter compositions during this period<sup>7</sup>. Similar to his performances of concerti,

---

<sup>4</sup> *The Correspondence of Muzio Clementi*, edited by David Rowland, Bologna, Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2010 (Muzio Clementi Opera Omnia, 61), p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Stephan Lindeman notes that at this time composers and pianists were cognisant of each other's work. *Structural Novelty and Tradition in the Early Romantic Piano Concerto*, New York, Pendragon Press, 1999, p.21.

<sup>6</sup> ELLSWORTH, Therese. 'Women Soloists and the Piano Concerto in Nineteenth-Century London', in: *Ad Parnassum: a Journal of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Instrumental Music*, 11/1 (2003), pp. 21-49: 21.

<sup>7</sup> For example, 'Fal Lal La' c.1795, 'The Favourite Hornpipe' c.1795–6, 'The Two Favourite Slave Dances in Black Beard' 1798, 'Logie of Buchan Rondo', c.1799, 'Three Sonatas Op.1 1801, 'Pleyel's Concertante' 1802. Field catered for the dual role of the virtuoso composer/pianist at the

however, these works were disseminated primarily in England via English publishers. Inevitably, this, to a certain extent, ensured anonymity outside of the British Isles, but it is not to suggest that Field was at a disadvantage: Field was active in London, a city, which according to Simon McVeigh, «no European capital (not even Paris) could rival» in terms of «the scale and variety of entertainments on offer»<sup>8</sup>; notwithstanding of course Field's relationship with Clementi, who was much respected by, and very influential in the musical world. Indeed, Field and other such pianists/composers active in London at the end of the eighteenth and start of the nineteenth centuries — generally with some connection to Clementi — have posthumously gained membership to the retrospective London Pianoforte School, a School that represented the most recent innovations in composition and technique<sup>9</sup>. Mindful of this, it is safe to assume that when Field arrived in Paris in 1802, a composer and pianist who had much to offer musical life there was anticipated.

In comparison to London, musical activity operated very differently in Paris. For example, while private concerts most certainly existed in the former city, it seems that musicians were more dependent on them in the latter. This can, to a certain extent, be attributed to the political situation, most notably the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, which undoubtedly left their mark on Parisian musical life and public concerts: musicians were forced to flee Paris at the onset of the Revolution, and in many cases they took refuge in London, as did Dussek for example. If artists were leaving the city for safety and for greater opportunities elsewhere, it was unlikely to have all the ingredients for success, or for a thriving musical life to attract artists for extended periods. According to William Weber, the relationship between the nobility and the state was the difference in the development of concerts in both London and Paris. He notes that in Paris, the government restricted the number of cultural events and although «several groups of wealthy amateurs and hired musicians conducted private performances [...] the state denied them licences for public concerts»<sup>10</sup>. In London, Weber continues, «the Crown granted the nobility autonomy in its cultural life and interfered only when governmental controls were profitable for both parties»<sup>11</sup>. It is hardly surprising then that Field would represent the most recent developments in piano playing and composition on his first visit to Paris.

In fact, as modern accounts record, the general consensus is that Field was widely accepted and extolled in Paris. Take David Branson, who briefly remarks that «in August, 1802, Clementi took Field to Paris, where his playing of Bach

---

turn of the nineteenth century. HOPKINSON, Cecil *A Bibliographical Catalogue of the Works of John Field 1782 – 1837*, London, Hopkinson, 1961,

<sup>8</sup> MCVEIGH, Simon. *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> This term was coined by Alexander Ringer, but is primarily associated with Nicholas Temperley.

<sup>10</sup> WEBER, William. *Music and the Middle Class: the Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna*, New York, Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1975, pp. 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> For more information on the political situation in Paris and its impact on music see WEBER, William *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008; and JOHNSON, James H. *Listening in Paris: a Cultural History*, Berkeley-London, California University Press, 1995.

and Handel Fugues, and also works by his teacher, made a sensation»<sup>12</sup>. Although more extensive, Patrick Piggott writes in similar vein:

Clementi and his protégé met with a warm reception from the musical world of Paris on their arrival at the beginning of August, 1802, and Pleyel evidently lost no time in arranging soirées at which John's brilliant playing was admired by the assembled connoisseurs. At these he doubtless played his three sonatas, for their publication in Paris shortly after his visit suggests that a demand for them had been created. Probably he also played his concerto, as well as works by Clementi, Dussek, etc., but he made his greatest effect in music which he might not have ventured to include in public concerts — that of Bach and Handel, composers who were virtually unknown in Paris at that time. John's performances from memory of Bach's '48' astonished the French musicians and were long remembered in Paris [...] and Clementi must have been highly gratified by the deep impression made by his pupil<sup>13</sup>.

While these comments bode well for Field's reputation, it is important to tread with caution because although quite probable, this 'image' of a young and successful pianist in Paris proves difficult to verify. This is in part because Branson and Piggott do not disclose their sources, creating a certain amount of suspicion over whom the musicians Field 'astonished' might be. Moreover, the music press had not firmly taken hold in Paris at this time, leaving no record of the 'public perception' of Field's concerts. Further ambiguity lies in Piggott's reference to the subsequent publication of Field's sonatas as a consequence of a demand he created through performances, which implies that these concerts were public; yet Piggott primarily considers a private concert setting, as the programming of works by Bach and Handel at this time attest. Piggott does not consider the impact of evasive comments such as Field «probably [...] played his concerto». In this respect, we might think of Branson's and Piggott's comments as exemplary 'man-made' images that demonstrate the manner in which reception history, as a form of image, has here recreated, and reproduced a perception of Field, «detached from the place and time in which it made its first appearance». Nevertheless, an image it remains in Field scholarship.

Thirty years later, the Parisian image of Field is ostensibly less ambiguous, for three reasons: music journalism had become a staple of Parisian musical life during this period, thus providing a snapshot of musical activity; public concerts were now prevalent, making it easier to trace Field's activity; and Paris had replaced London as the leading city for music, attracting reigning musicians of the day: according to Dana Gooley, «Paris was the principal city in which virtuosos made and sustained their reputations, and even the most established pianists were obliged to make regular visits to preserve their place»<sup>14</sup>. Inevitably,

---

<sup>12</sup> BRANSON, David. *John Field and Chopin*, London, Barrie and Jenkins, 1972, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> PIGGOTT, Patrick. *The Life and Music of John Field 1782-1837*, London, Faber and Faber, 1973, pp. 18-19.

<sup>14</sup> GOOLEY, Dana. *The Virtuoso Liszt*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004 (New perspectives in music history and criticism), p. 59.

then, Field would visit Paris, but he was returning to and competing in a very different market and environment, and would naturally adopt a different role. Yet, these images are not necessarily more reliable, because contextual issues of both Field's appearances in Paris are generally ignored. While it may be argued, for example, that these later images — unlike those created by Piggott or Branson — are in fact extracted from primary sources, it is important to note that they were created by the Parisian musical world in the 1830s and have often been taken too literally by Field scholars.

## REVIEWS OF FIELD'S CONCERTS

*La Revue Musicale* (1827–1834) was the first significant and leading music journal in Paris, in which Field's return to London was included in the «news abroad section» dated the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1832. It states that

[...] having left England to take up residence in Russia thirty years ago, Field has been heard in public for the first time in the first Philharmonic Society's concert of the year, which took place on 27<sup>th</sup> of February. He performed his new concerto in E flat major; a new style, a great deal different from his first works. He was a total success. The clarity, precision, and technical perfection that represents the Clementi school, were exhibited in his performance, which itself was polished, elegant, and executed with an expression that one very rarely encounters today<sup>15</sup>.

From this it appears that Field's Fourth Concerto was new to English and/or Parisian audiences, despite the fact that it had been published sixteen years earlier in Germany, in 1816, and shortly after in London and Paris; Cecil Hopkinson considers the year 1817 for its publication in England, and later than 1820 in France<sup>16</sup>. It is important to note, however, that it was not unusual to advertise a work as 'new' in order to attract audiences<sup>17</sup>. What is of particular interest is reference to Field as a pianist first and foremost, as well as to his association with Clementi, recur in the majority of reviews about Field. Consequently, it is worth considering whether the Parisian musical world had inadvertently carved out Field's position in musical life there before he arrived. It is certainly clear, however, that Field was anticipated as an important musical

---

<sup>15</sup> *Revue Musicale*, 21 avril 1832, p. 91 : « Nouvelles étrangère. Field, qui depuis trente ans avait quitté l'Angleterre pour s'établir en Russie, s'est fait entendre pour la première fois en public dans le premier concert de la société philharmonique de cette année qui a eu lieu le 27 février. Il a exécuté un nouveau concerto de sa composition en *mi* bémol, d'un style nouveau et fort différent de ses premiers ouvrages. Son succès a été complet. On a distingué dans son jeu la netteté, la précision, la perfection de mécanisme qui constituent l'école de Clementi, joints à un fini, une grâce, une expression qu'on rencontre fort rarement aujourd'hui ».

<sup>16</sup> TEMPERLEY, Nicholas. Review, 'John Field'. *The Musical Times* vol. 103 no. 1430 (1962), p239.

<sup>17</sup> Field's First Concerto was advertised as new on a number of occasions before he initially left London in 1802. According to Ian Taylor this was a common practice that reflected the public's desire for novelty at this time. *Music in London and the Myth of Decline: From Haydn to the Philharmonic*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

figure, and coupled with the announcement of his arrival in the same journal on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1832 — «having come from London, the famous pianist Field has been in Paris for a few days»<sup>18</sup> — it seems inevitable that his concerts would be well-attended, and substantially reviewed in one of the most important music journals of the nineteenth-century.

Of all the Field concerts at this time, Piggott and Branson tend to focus on two — one on Christmas Day at the Conservatoire, and one the following February at Pape's salon — reviews of which continue to resonate in Field historiography. Yet, what is generally not known is that Field almost immediately appeared in concert in Boulogne, just outside of Paris. Although this regional concert was not attached to prestige comparable to the Conservatoire or Pape's salon, it is important because it provides insight to Field's reception. Moreover, it features in a later advertisement for Field's concert at the Conservatoire, and it exhibits similar trends to the aforementioned 'news abroad' report. The review of this concert is reprinted from 'the Music Column' of *L'Annotateur* in *La Revue Musicale*, 20<sup>th</sup> October 1832. The musical situation in Boulogne is largely addressed:

Regarding the event hosted by J. Field, the writer of 'The Music Column' in *L'Annotateur* exclaimed: "You really have to believe that, musically, Boulogne is the most loved of all towns; and I would be quite surprised if such a crowd of artists that move among us are to be found elsewhere. In less than four months, we have heard all the works, in all genres, of the most renowned musicians: Paganini, Tulou, Drouët, Field, Franc-homme and Madame Cinti-Damoreau. Wouldn't it be wonderful for us if Boulogne, which has so much to offer, moved ahead of all other cities of this Department, and if through hard work and good influence, a brotherhood of all departmental music societies came together to form a Philharmonic Society for the Pas-de-Calais region. As a citizen of Boulogne, this would be one of my goals. Furthermore, the North and Calvados Departments have already set an example for this approach, and above all Alsace, probably the most musical area of France. These regions all contributed vastly to the project pursued so passionately by the savant Mr Fétis in his *Musical Review*, for the propagation of good doctrines and the encouragement of solid studies. Now I must say that the main topic of this article was meant to be Mr Field's concert. You might have forgotten about this. I am thus about to pay tribute with admiration to this great pianist. Mr Field hails from the School of Clementi, this classical, authentic and dignified school, from which the traditions are unfortunately disappearing slowly<sup>19</sup>.

---

<sup>18</sup> *Revue Musicale*, 20 octobre 1832, p. 302: «Le célèbre pianiste Field est arrivé de Londres à Paris depuis quelques jour».

<sup>19</sup> *Revue Musicale*, 20 octobre 1832, pp. 303-304: «A propos d'une soirée donnée par J. Field, le rédacteur de *la Chronique musicale*, de *l'Annotateur*, s'écrie: "Il faut croire vraiment que, pour la musique, Boulogne est la ville favorisée entre toutes les villes; et je serais bien surpris si l'exemple se présentait ailleurs de cette affluence d'artistes qui viennent s'arrêter parmi nous. En moins de quatre mois, nous avons épuisé le répertoire des plus hautes célébrités dans presque tous les genres: Paganini, Tulou, Drouët, Field, Franc-homme et Mme Cinti-Damoreau. Il serait glorieux pour nous que Boulogne, qui peut tant pour cela, prît le pas sur les autres villes du département, et que, par ses travaux et son influence, une confraternité de toutes les sociétés de musique

Here, it appears that Field, at the end of a series of concerts given by a number of other popular artists, enhanced and confirmed the musical reputation of this town, at least for the reviewer. It demonstrates how this suburban town aspired to compete with large cities, such as Paris, by way of securing place in French musical life. In relation to Field, it is interesting to note that classified as a 'great pianist' he is once again aligned with Clementi's 'School'; a school which was becoming increasingly difficult to encounter. The presence of this review is evident in the next mention of Field in Parisian press, which was a way of advertising Field's concert in the Conservatoire that Christmas. *La Revue Musicale*, dated the 24<sup>th</sup> November 1832, published a substantial paragraph on the composer:

The celebrated pianist, Mr Field, the most eminent of Clementi's students, has been in Paris for some time. He intends to give a concert in the auditorium of the Conservatoire on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December next: undoubtedly, this interesting matinée will be a success; because Mr Field, so worthy of respect also as a composer, has the most beautiful, charming and suave talent on the piano. We recently had the pleasure of hearing this artist, and in his playing were discovered the inexpressible charm that used to move us when listening to Clementi and Dussek, and a few other great artists of a school that exists hardly more than a memory. Field still represents this School in all its glory. To see the stillness of his hands and his peaceful presence, one would be led to believe that he is performing simple works, because the greatest difficulties are nothing to him. Under his fingers, the piano ceases to be a mechanical instrument; he sings and supports his sounds as would seem only possible with a stringed instrument. As soon as he touches the piano, it becomes an instrument that *makes music*, not a show of amazing feats; a role to which today's most skilled artists reduce it too often. A lot of artists were present with us in the audience of Field's concert, sharing enthusiasm for his admirable talent.<sup>20</sup>

---

départementales se formât en société philharmonique du Pas-de-Calais. En ma qualité de citoyen boulonnais, c'est là une de mes ambitions. Nous serions d'ailleurs précédés dans cette voie par l'exemple des départemens du Nord et du Calvados, et principalement de l'Alsace, le pays le plus musical peut-être de la France, qui, tous, contribuent de tant d'efforts au grand œuvre si puissamment poursuivi par le savant M. Fétis, dans sa *Revue musicale*, pour la propagation des bonnes doctrines et l'encouragement des études fortes". Maintenant j'ai besoin de dire que le concert du célèbre M. Field devait être le sujet principal de cet article. On pourrait l'avoir oublié. J'y viens donc pour payer mon tribut d'admiration au grand pianiste. M. Field appartient à l'école de Clémenti, à cette école classique, pure et pleine de majesté, dont les traditions se perdent malheureusement de jour en jour».

<sup>20</sup> *Revue Musicale*, 24 novembre 1832, pp. 341-342: «M. Field, pianiste célèbre et le plus distingué de tous les élèves de Clémenti, est à Paris depuis quelque temps. Il se propose d'y donner un concert dans la salle du Conservatoire le 25 décembre prochain: on ne peut douter du succès de cette matinée intéressante; car M. Field, si digne d'estime d'ailleurs comme compositeur, possède le plus beau et le plus suave talent sur le piano. Nous avons eu récemment le plaisir d'entendre cet artiste, et nous avons retrouvé dans son jeu le charme inexprimable qui nous faisait autrefois tressaillir en écoutant Clémenti, Dussek, et quelques autres grands artistes d'une école qui n'existe presque plus que dans nos souvenirs. M. Field la représente encore dans toute sa gloire. A voir l'immobilité de ses mains et le calme de sa physionomie, on serait tenté de croire qu'il n'exécute que des choses faciles, parce que les plus grandes difficultés ne sont rien

Each time Field appears in the press another element is added to his reception. Not only is he aligned with the School of Clementi but he is also its most notable member. Clementi had clearly left his mark on the musical world, and it is worth questioning whether Field walked in his shadow, or whether Field's reputation was heavily indebted to his apprenticeship with Clementi. Furthermore, the reviewer assures the success of Field's forthcoming concert, but for the first time Field is equally acknowledged as a composer, despite reference to the performance of his concerto in London. By referring to a recent concert, which is likely to have been that in Boulogne, the author sets a precedent for the next concert and what becomes the dominant image of Field in Paris; he was a celebrated pianist, as well as a pleasant reminder of a past that was slowly disappearing. It could be postulated, that Field's popularity was in part due to the novelty of the past, and while this is in a manner true, on closer inspection it is clear that Field was largely perceived as a true virtuoso, whose primary concern was music, not theatrics.

The concert itself was headlined in the *Revue Musicale*, 29<sup>th</sup> December 1832, as 'Mr Field's Concert', and it received extensive coverage. Before broaching this topic, however, the author attempts to fill in Field's absence of thirty years from Western Europe. By this review, it had become typical to write of the Field-Clementi relationship; though it had slightly altered. Here, Field's style of playing is his own, but his successful compositions — the concerti in particular — are considered as an outcome of the parting of ways of the former master and student, and the influence of contemporaries in Russia. The review remains true to the concert's advertisement, that is, Field's objective was to create music, and the concert would be a success. Similar to the Boulogne recital, it seems that for the author, despite Field's accomplished performance, Field himself was the principle reason for attending this concert<sup>21</sup>; as the following review attests.

Concert by Mr John Field

Clementi, whose talent epitomised perfection in the art of piano performance, gave lessons to a lot of people, but mentored only a small number of pupils. Amongst them, Messrs Field and Klengel are those who have acquired the most distinguished talent. Clementi took pleasure by listening to these artists, which he had tutored. He embarked on quite long journeys in France, Italy, Germany, and Russia, where he was accompanied by these students, presenting them as evidence of the quality of his method. It was during one of these trips that he left Mr Field behind in Petersburg where this great pianist has since remained for nearly thirty years. At the time that Field arrived in Russia, the Emperor Alexander's court had become the meeting place for lots of great artists, while the two Russian capitals fought to

---

pour lui. Sous ses doigts, le piano cesse d'être un instrument mécanique; il chante et soutient ses sons comme pourrait le faire un instrument à archet. Lorsqu'il le touche, le piano est un instrument à faire de la musique et non un théâtre à tours de force, rôle auquel le genre d'habileté de la plupart des artistes de nos jours le réduit trop souvent. Beaucoup d'artistes assistaient comme nous à la soirée où M. Field s'est fait entendre; ils ont partagé notre enthousiasme pour son talent admirable».

<sup>21</sup> The artist, not the music, was often the main attraction of concerts at this time.

have them. It was in Petersburg or Moscow then that you could find Boieldieu, Rode, Baillot, Lamarre, Eloy, Devicq, and some others, whose merit was more or less eminent. The presence of so many talented men could alone comfort Mr Field for the grief that followed the separation from his famous master; this separation also had an influence on the development of his compositional genius. We may even owe all the good works that came from this pen to the fact that those artists modelled their works on each other and perhaps the need amongst all artists to emulate the beautiful works that came out of Field's pen. His works are known by all pianists; his concerti in particular have been the object of their study. In these works, the nature of Mr Field's talent appears as it would in his performance, where you can equally observe a graceful melody, and well-selected passages. What is more, original and entirely himself, he only borrows from the masters who have gone before him, or from his contemporaries, the art of writing with elegance, and this wisdom, which consists of not making the piano an exceptional instrument, with the only objective of showcasing finger dexterity. In addition, it is music that Mr Field wants to make when he plays the piano, and his intentions are far more to move than to amaze, but what he does not want to do he does anyway because nothing is more amazing than a pianist who plays in this way. Anyone who has not heard this great pianist cannot comprehend his admirable finger technique, the musical skill such that the greatest difficulties seem to be simple, and that his hand does not seem to move. He is otherwise not less surprising in his way of striking the keys with an infinite range of dynamics between the louds, softs, and accents. An enthusiasm impossible to describe, a genuine frenzy manifested in this audience during the rendition full of charm which was realised with utter perfection, precision, clarity and expression that would be impossible to surpass and that very few pianists could hope to match. If I only relied on my taste, I would say that the two rondos and the previous delightful andantes are excellent concert pieces; but, without being able to explain why, the public likes something more brilliant and less tranquil in the second part of a concert. Mr Field seems to like neither that which we call in misleading terms fantasies nor variations – I hardly like them either – but if the pleasant rondos he writes and plays so well have appeal in a salon, I think that it would be necessary to choose something else for a larger venue and in front of a large audience to receive, in return, such an applause that an artist cannot go without. Other than this, I will not highlight my remarks any further, because Field was supposed to be the main focus.<sup>22</sup>.

---

<sup>22</sup> *Revue Musicale*, 29 décembre 1832, p. 381: «Concert de M. John Field. Clémenti, dont le talent était le type de la perfection dans l'art de jouer du piano, a donné des leçons à beaucoup de personnes, mais il n'a fait l'éducation complète que d'un petit nombre d'élèves. Parmi ceux-ci, MM. Field et Klengel sont ceux qui ont acquis le talent le plus distingué. Lui-même se complaisait dans son ouvrage en écoutant ces deux artistes, et il entreprit d'assez longs voyages en France, en Italie, en Allemagne et en Russie dans lesquels il se faisait accompagner par eux afin de les faire entendre comme des témoignages de la bonté de sa méthode. Ce fut dans un de ces voyages qu'il laissa M. Field à Pétersbourg, où ce grand pianiste a passé depuis lors près de trente ans.

A l'époque où M. Field arriva en Russie, la cour de l'empereur Alexandre était devenue le rendez-vous de beaucoup de grands artistes, et les deux capitales de la Russie se disputaient leurs talents. C'était alors qu'on trouvait à Pétersbourg ou à Moscou Boieldieu, Rode, Baillot, Lamarre, Eloy Devicq, et quelques autres dont le mérite était plus ou moins distingué. La réunion de tant

Here Field triumphs, and for the first time we get a glimpse at the contemporary significance of Field the pianist, a musical figure who captivated Parisian audiences. The author conjures up images of highly enthusiastic audience members, and of Field as a sort of giant amongst men. His past, or perhaps substantial absence from Paris and London, lurks behind this review, however, for the author points out that in the second half of a concert, audiences are accustomed to, and indeed expect something more entertaining than rondos and andantes. These works were, despite their merit, suitable for the salon, and although it seems peculiar that Field would perform these works in place of a concerto in public — it is not clear whether Field played the entire concert, but a review by d'Ortigue below suggests that Field did programme a concerto at the Conservatoire — it may be that Field wished to target a varied audience, or did not wish to compete with the level of showmanship at this time<sup>23</sup>.

Field's 'second concert', by which it evidently means in Paris city was also a major event. The review paints a picture of an over-crowded concert-hall, to the extent that people eagerly waited in adjoining rooms, whereby they were forced to tolerate miserable weather conditions. Fortunately, such discomfort was

---

d'hommes de talent put seule consoler M. Field du chagrin que lui causait sa séparation de son illustre maître; elle eut aussi de l'influence sur le développement de son génie pour la composition, et peut-être devons-nous à l'émulation qui se développait entre tous ces artistes les belles compositions sorties de la plume de M. Field. Ces compositions sont connues de tous les pianistes; ses concertos ont été surtout l'objet de leurs études. Dans ces ouvrages, la nature du talent de M. Field se montre comme dans son exécution, et l'on y remarque également la douceur, la grâce de la mélodie, la pureté de l'harmonie et le bon goût des traits. D'ailleurs, original et tout individuel, il n'emprunte aux grands maîtres qui l'ont devancé ou à ses contemporains que l'art d'écrire avec élégance et cette sagesse qui consiste à ne point faire du piano un instrument d'exception sans autre objet que de faire briller le mécanisme des doigts.

C'est aussi de la musique que M. Field veut faire lorsqu'il joue du piano, et l'objet qu'il se propose est bien plus d'émouvoir que d'étonner; mais ce qu'il ne veut pas faire, il le fait, car rien n'est plus étonnant qu'un pianiste qui joue dans sa manière. Quiconque n'a point entendu ce grand pianiste ne peut se faire d'idée du mécanisme admirable de ses doigts, mécanisme tel que les plus grandes difficultés semblent être des choses fort simples, et que sa main n'a point l'air de se mouvoir. Il n'est d'ailleurs pas moins étonnant dans l'art d'attaquer la note et de varier à l'infini les diverses nuances de force, de douceur et d'accent. Un enthousiasme impossible à décrire, un véritable délire s'est manifesté dans le public à l'audition de ce concert plein de charme rendu avec une perfection de fini, de précision, de netteté et d'expression qu'il serait impossible de surpasser et que bien peu de pianistes pourraient égaler.

Si je ne consultais que mon goût, je dirais que les deux rondeaux et les délicieux andantés dont ils ont été précédés sont d'excellents morceaux de concerts; mais, sans pouvoir expliquer pourquoi, le public aime dans une seconde partie de concert quelque chose de plus brillant et de moins tranquille. M. Field semble n'aimer ni ce que nous appelons en langage mensonger des fantaisies, ni les variations; je ne les aime guère non plus; mais si les agréables rondeaux qu'il fait et joue si bien ont du charme dans un salon, je pense qu'il faudrait autre chose dans une grande salle et devant un public nombreux pour exciter les applaudissemens dont un artiste ne peut se passer. Au reste, je ne donne point à cette observation plus d'importance qu'elle n'en mérite.

L'intérêt du concert de M. Field devait se porter sur lui».

<sup>23</sup> James Parakilas notes that Field was in St Petersburg where French society was prevalent, notwithstanding that Russia was likely to have progressed at a much slower rate than Western Europe.

apparently justified and somewhat forgotten during Field's performance, as the following review explains:

The second concert given by the famous Field in Pape's show rooms attracted a large crowd. It was packed, that is, we had little option but to perch ourselves on the bench where we remained standing throughout the concert. Mr Pape could not expect to be paid a compliment on his music rooms; there are few in Paris less accommodating. Situated between two streets and without an antechamber on any side, the unlucky music lover who could not find place within the sanctuary, enjoyed the double pleasure of feeling a bit more of the cold air from the outside, while hearing a bit less of the music. A good and practical concert hall is difficult to find, I know, but what is less difficult to find is a way of protecting the audience from the unbearable vicinity of sticks and umbrellas. The abundance of concert goers, gathered on the strength of Field, have not had reason to regret the enthusiasm with which they came to hear this talented artist yet again. We found him just as he always is, elegant and graceful at its best, not this coquettish artificial type that you can spot from a distance; but of this respectable, wise, and if I dare say, reserved style, which suits the pupil of Clementi so much; Clementi's favourite pupil at that. It is impossible to imagine something clearer, more accurate, and more sparkling as the touch of this famous pianist. Field's playing is comparable to a pearl necklace whose beads are unlike, but are combined by the most perfect harmony. Perhaps if Mr Field were twenty-five years old we would be more demanding of him and ask him to add to the qualities he possesses, at a distinguished level, qualities that we like to find in other pianists, what we mean is more flair and entertainment. Despite all this he is good looking, and happy are those who remain so.<sup>24</sup>!

---

<sup>24</sup> *Revue Musicale*, 26 janvier 1833, pp. 413-414: Second Concert de M. John Field DANS LES SALONS DE M. PAPE. Le second concert, donné par le célèbre Field dans les salons de Pape, avait attiré nombreuse compagnie. Tout était plein, les pièces environnantes comme le salon principal; et nous trouvant du nombre dès retardataires, force nous a été de nous hucher sur le bout d'un banc et de nous y tenir debout pendant tout le concert. M. Pape n'a pas lieu de s'attendre qu'on lui fasse compliment sur ses salons de musique; il en est peu à Paris de moins commodes. Placés entre deux rues et sans antichambre d'aucun côté, le malencontreux amateur qui n'a pu trouver [*sic*] place dans le sanctuaire jouit du double agrément à chaque nouveau-venu de sentir un peu plus l'air froid de l'extérieur et d'entendre un peu moins la musique. Une salle de concert bonne et commode est difficile à trouver, je le sais, mais ce qui l'est moins, c'est un moyen de garantir le public de l'insupportable voisinage du bureau des cannes et parapluie. Les nombreux auditeurs rassemblés par M. Field n'ont pas eu lieu de regretter l'empressement qu'ils ont mis à venir réentendre cet habile artiste. Nous l'avons retrouvé ce qu'il est toujours, la perfection du genre élégant et gracieux, non de cette grâce minaudière et empruntée qui sent le fard d'une lieue; mais de cette élégance correcte, sage, et, si j'ose le dire, réservée, qui sied si bien à l'élève de Clémenti et à son élève de prédilection. Il est impossible de se figurer quelque chose de plus net, de plus précis, de plus perlé que le toucher de ce célèbre pianiste. Un trait de Field, c'est un collier de perles dont tous les grains sont dissemblables, mais sont combinés entre eux avec l'harmonie la plus parfaite. Peut-être si M. Field avait vingt-cinq ans serions-nous fort exigeants envers lui et lui demanderions-nous d'ajouter aux qualités qu'il possède à un degré si éminent, des qualités que nous aimons à retrouver dans d'autres pianistes, nous voulons dire plus de verve et d'entraînement; malgré tout, son lot est assez beau. Heureux ceux qui sont aussi bien départis! ».

In the first instance, the author demonstrates the extent to which music venues in Paris had yet to be adapted to suit the needs of growing audiences, at least when famous pianists such as Field visited. Here, Field has returned to his former position as representative of the school of Clementi, whose playing is 'correct'. Of particular interest, however, is reference to Field's age, which can be interpreted in two ways: first, Field remains popular despite failing to follow in the footsteps of current virtuosi because he is symbolic of a now rare school; and second, if Field were younger, he would have no choice but to partake in similar theatrical displays because the artist is, to an extent, dictated by the audience. Would Field have been as popular, therefore, had he remained in London or Paris these thirty years? Or, put another way, would Field have adapted, or survived as a young pianist in the current Parisian market?

Yet at this point, Field's contemporary significance is hard to contest: reviews are primarily positive. While the next review does not stray too far from this tone, criticism is evident, and it has left its mark on Field historiography. Similar to the previous review, it also claims to be the second concert given by Field — which seems to mean the second at Pape's venue:

The second and last musical concert by Mr Field in Mr Pape's rooms, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

At the second of Field's concerts there was less of a crowd than the previous gathering, and the reason could be read on the programme; with the exception of Wogt, Urhan, and the beneficiary, there were in fact no names after which masses of amateurs flock. The manuscript concerto performed by Field contains passages saturated with a charm and elegance that make the works of this great pianist stand out. Field is easily recognised in the first solo. We cannot offer the same praise for the rest of the work, which, in far too many places, seems to us unclear, lacking cheerful ideas, hardly worthy, in a word, of the reputation of the author. Yet, we must reproach Field one more time to have pushed complacency so far as playing the second part of the harp and piano duo, which was lengthy, tiresome and nondescript musical chatter composed in another century by Nadermann; the piece by itself is capable of putting to sleep the most tenacious gathering of amateurs. Without a doubt one needs complacency, especially in the presence of such talented men, but this was pushing it too far. <sup>25</sup>.

---

<sup>25</sup> *Revue Musicale*, 9 février 1833, pp. 10-11 : «Deuxième et dernière soirée musicale. Donnée dans les salons de M. Pape, par M. Field, le 3 février. A la deuxième soirée de M. Field il y avait une affluence un peu moins nombreuse qu'à la réunion précédente, et la raison, on pourrait la lire sur le programme; à l'exception de Wogt, d'Urhan et du bénéficiaire, il n'y avait en effet aucun de ces noms qui font accourir la foule des amateurs.

Le concerto manuscrit exécuté par M. Field renferme des passages remplis de cette grace et de cette élégance qui distinguent les compositions de ce grand pianiste. Nous l'avons retrouvé là avec tout son talent, surtout dans le premier solo. Nous ne pouvons faire le même éloge du reste de cette composition, qui, en beaucoup trop d'endroits, nous a paru diffuse, peu riche en motifs heureux, peu digne, en un mot, de la renommée de son auteur. La délicieuse exécution de M. Field nous a très heureusement servi de compensation.

Il est encore un reproche que nous devons adresser à ce grand pianiste, c'est d'avoir poussé la complaisance jusqu'à exécuter, lui second, un espèce de duo pour harpe et piano, long, fastidieux et insignifiant bavardage musical composé dans l'autre siècle par Nadermann, et capable à lui seul d'endormir la plus tenace réunion d'amateurs. Il faut de la complaisance sans doute, surtout chez les hommes de grand talent, mais c'est en avoir par trop que de la pousser jusque-là ».

Despite many of these reviews being published anonymously, this one in particular has long been attributed to Fétis<sup>26</sup>. It is perhaps the most cited concert in Field scholarship, often serving to justify Field's posthumous neglect: it is curious that one negative comment should outweigh numerous positive ones. The change in tone coincides with a focus on Field the composer, not the pianist; Field's performance was considered the redeeming factor. Criticism of Field's concerto is significant, because of all his works, the concerti have particularly suffered especially under the critical eye of formal scrutiny; I will return to this below. For now, there remains one last significant reference to Field in Paris to examine.

Music critic Joseph d'Ortigue's *Le Balcon de l'Opéra* was published in 1833, in which he recounts his impressions of concerts in Paris, including those given by Field. Here, d'Ortigue believes that Field's music can only be understood in relation to Field himself, and so he provides the reader with a detailed account of the composer/pianist as he perceived him. This foreshadows the biographical approach that now permeates Field research; an approach that is not unique to Field. Having completed this task, d'Ortigue emphasises how Field follows himself. Similar to other critics, d'Ortigue was as enthusiastic about Field's concert at the conservatoire, while he is more reserved about his reaction to the concert that Fétis also reviewed — he adds that the absence of an orchestra may be held accountable. In summary, d'Ortigue's coverage of these concerts is quite detailed, as the following demonstrates:

I didn't have the time or space in order to write a detailed account of the concert of the celebrated John Field given on Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> December last, at the Conservatoire. Nevertheless, before talking of the one that has just taken place in Pape's salons, I must go back to the first concert which I am sure will conjure up pleasant memories for those that were there. I do it all the more willingly because at the Conservatoire, Field was accompanied by a complete orchestra; something that is important for the musician. Similar to Paganini, Field's compositions, as his playing, are as remarkable as his performances. It was double pleasure for us, and so it's a double appraisal which we have to undertake here. I will allow myself to consider only the principal pieces of this first meeting. As a pianist, Field cannot be compared to any of his rivals, by which I mean, in style or approach. He has not adopted any system, he is not from any school, not Dussek's, not Clementi's, not Steibelt's. Field is Field; an innate and original talent. All the ordinary musical procedures seem to disappear in his style of playing. It is full of carefree and good-humoured wit, and withal a precision and a surprising aplomb, grace and elegance. Field sits quite simply at the piano, as if at his own fireside. He makes no ceremonial gestures, nor has he adopted any ostentatious behaviour as have so many of our artists these days. Even in the opening bars you would be tempted to think of his hand as heavy, then suddenly the playing becomes agile, delicate, and incredibly precise in passages of the most extreme volubility. He remains little animated — in short he is cool, but his coolness is an essential part of his art. Have you ever met one of these nonchalant and carefree middle-class men, in whose pompous and familiarly plump

---

<sup>26</sup> Branson, Piggott, and Handy Southall all attribute it to Fétis.

way, which first puts you off, but in the end fascinates you with a conversation, full of charm, a pleasant and varied intellect, a cutting wit, a harmless mockery, which elevates their simplicity so? That is Field! In providing thus a portrait of Field, I give an idea of his music, which must reflect his character, if it is true, as they say so many times and in all cases, that *the style is man*, or if you prefer, *the expression of man*. Sometimes strange, old-fashioned on the edges, sometimes elegant and freshly trimmed, sometimes svelte and capricious, the music of Field is comparable to fairy music. It is easy to recognise it for its instrumentation as for the novelty of the melody. Instrumentation has long been considered a subordinate part in concertos; all attention is aimed at the solo instrument. However, some great symphonists, who were also celebrated virtuosi, have known how to create a very successful accompaniment part, written with understanding of the various orchestral accents, with the effect of string and wind instruments cleverly managed, in the accompaniment of solos. In this respect the concerti of Beethoven, Paganini and Field are in a category of their own. Thus, as in the concerto performed by Field at the Conservatoire one is astonished to hear, in the middle of a pianissimo, a burst of trumpets which produces an unexpected effect; strange, because it is not at all terrifying, but seems, on the contrary, a far-off voice floating in the air. Elsewhere, the composer passes on the melody line to the orchestra, whereas in one hand, he creates a type of cadence that is not a second theme, but more of an obligatory accompaniment with the happiest end. This requires a thorough knowledge of the art, and to be adept at combinations that result in unknown effects which is particular to a few artists only [...]

But let's go back to Field and his second concert. Never have the beautiful rooms of M. Pape offered a gathering of such a numerous and superb gathering. It is because Drouet, Baillot from St Petersburg have a magical force. However, as remarkable as the recital was, and as much talent as the virtuoso deployed in the four pieces played. I confess that the impression that has stayed with me is not comparable to that which affected me at the Conservatoire. I also must not let myself be influenced by the concert from the day before. Adding to this, the absence of the orchestra, of which Field takes advantage so delightfully, and the inconvenience caused by sitting too close to the pianist, for which more than one amateur would have without doubt envied me. Being so close as well as the view of the finger work does not leave the viewer in a favourable position to judge such music which should be heard from a distance. Nevertheless, the soothing theme which Field inserted in his concerto, and his quintet, are charming works, through the execution of which his talent was never inferior. Each time he stimulated endless applause, the most heartfelt from the auditorium [...] A duet by Dussek for piano and violin performed by Field and Baillot, capped this beautiful evening.

27.

---

<sup>27</sup> ORTIGUE, Joseph d'. *Le Balcon de l'Opéra*, pp. 287-290: «Le temps et l'espace m'ont manqué pour rendre un compte détaillé du concert que le célèbre John Field a donné le dimanche, 25 décembre dernier, au Conservatoire de musique. Néanmoins, avant de parler de celui qui vient d'avoir lieu dans les salons de M. Pape, je dois revenir au premier, sûr de rappeler à tous ceux qui y ont assisté d'agréables souvenirs. Je le fais d'autant plus volontiers qu'au Conservatoire Field était accompagné de l'orchestre complet; circonstance qui n'est pas indifférente pour le musicien. De même que Paganini, Field n'est pas moins remarquable par ses compositions que par son jeu. C'est un double plaisir qu'il nous procure, c'est une double étude à laquelle nous devons nous livrer. Je ne m'arrêterai qu'aux principaux morceaux de cette première séance.

Field's presence in Paris therefore was palpable. Yet, if scholarship on musical life in Paris in the 1830s is considered, one may be misled to think that few pianist/composers other than Liszt and Thalberg were of any interest there<sup>28</sup>.

---

Comme pianiste, Field ne peut être comparé à aucun de ses rivaux, je veux dire quant au genre et à la méthode. Il n'a aucun système adopté, il n'est d'aucune école, ni de celle de Dusseck, ni de celle de Clémenti, ni de celle de Steibelt. Field est Field. C'est un talent natif et original. Tous les procédés ordinaires de mécanisme semblent disparaître dans sa manière de jouer. Elle est pleine de laisser-aller et de bonhomie spirituelle. Avec cela une précision et un aplomb suprenants; une grâce et une coquetterie exquises. Field s'assied tout bonnement à son piano, comme au coin de son feu. Il n'affecte aucune de ces attitudes préparées, aucun de ses gestes d'apparat, genre dans lequel excellent un si grand nombre de nos artistes. Dès les premières mesures, on serait tenté de trouver sa main pesante. Puis tout à coup son jeu devient agile, délicat et d'une netteté incroyable dans les traits de la plus extrême volubilité. Il s'anime peu. Tranchons le mot ; Il est froid, mais cette froideur est en quelque sorte une condition de son talent. Avez-vous jamais rencontré un de ces bons bourgeois, sans souci, dont les manières lourdes et familièrement rondes vous ont d'abord déplu, mais qui ont fini pour vous captiver par une causerie remplie de charme, une érudition agréable et variée, un tour d'esprit fin et piquant, une raillerie ingénue, qui relèvent si singulièrement leur simplicité ? Voilà Field. En faisant ainsi le portrait de Field, j'ai donné une idée de sa musique, laquelle doit reproduire son individualité, s'il est vrai, comme on l'a dit tant de fois et à tous propos, que *le style est l'homme*, ou, si l'on veut, *l'expression de l'homme*. Tantôt bizarre, gothique dans ses contours, tantôt élégante et fraîchement parée, tantôt svelte et capricieuse, la musique de Field est une musique de fées. Mais elle ne se distingue pas moins par l'instrumentation que par l'abondance et la nouveauté du chant. L'instrumentation a long-temps été considérée comme une partie très-subalterne dans les concertos. Toute l'attention se portait sur l'instrument principal. Cependant de grands symphonistes, qui, en même temps, étaient des virtuoses célèbres, ont su tirer un très-heureux parti de l'emploi fait avec discernement des divers accens de l'orchestre et des effets des instrumens à cordes et des instrumens à vent, habilement ménagés, dans l'accompagnement des solos. Sous ce rapport, les concerts de Beethoven, de Paganini et de Field doivent être rangés à part. Ainsi comme dans le concert exécuté par ce dernier au Conservatoire, on est tout étonné d'entendre au milieu d'un pianissimo un éclat de trompettes qui produit un effet inattendu, étrange, parce qu'il n'a rien de terrible, et qu'il semble au contraire une voix lointaine qui plane dans les airs. Ailleurs, le compositeur transportera le chant dans l'orchestre, tandis que d'une seule main il fera sur son piano une espèce de cadence qui n'est pas un second chant, mais plutôt un accompagnement obligé du résultat le plus heureux. Il faut pour cela une connaissance approfondie de l'art, et ce génie de combinaison qui devine des effets inconnus, et qui est le partage d'un très-petit nombre d'artistes. [...]

Mais revenons à Field et à son second concert. Jamais les beaux salons de M. Pape n'avaient offert une réunion plus nombreuse et plus brillante. C'est que les noms du pianiste de Saint-Pétersbourg, de Drouet, de Baillot, ont une puissance magique. Cependant, quelque remarquable qu'ait été cette soirée, quelque talent que le virtuose ait déployé dans les quatre morceaux qu'il a fait entendre, j'avoue que l'impression qui m'en est restée n'est pas comparable à celle qu'il avait produite sur moi au Conservatoire. D'ailleurs, j'avais aussi à me défendre des souvenirs de la séance de la veille, dont je vais parler à l'instant. Ajoutez à cela l'absence de l'orchestre, dont Field tire un parti si délicieux, et l'inconvénient qui résultait de la place que j'occupais trop près du pianiste, et que plus d'un amateur m'aurait sans doute enviée. Cette proximité et la vue du mécanisme sont peu propres à illusion et peu favorables à juger une musique aérienne, et qu'il faut entendre à distance. Néanmoins le thème suave que Field a intercalé dans son concerto, et son quintette, sont des morceaux ravissans et dans l'exécution desquels son talent ne s'est jamais montré inférieur à lui-même. Il a constamment excité dans l'auditoire les plus vifs applaudissemens. [...] Un duo de Dusseck, pour piano et violon, exécuté par Field et Baillot, a couronné cette belle séance ».

<sup>28</sup> This is not unique to Field, however, as his contemporaries including Hummel and Dussek have primarily been disregarded posthumously.

While I acknowledge that Field did not dominate musical life in Paris at this time, and while I also acknowledge that research always has a specific focus, Field's concerts attracted a sizable audience and substantial coverage.

#### FIELD POSTHUMOUSLY

Posthumously, Field is commonly regarded as a minor nineteenth-century composer, who is significant chiefly as the predecessor to Chopin, or as the mere instigator of the nocturne. His concerti, a genre that was crucial to the career of a piano virtuoso at the turn of the nineteenth century, have been widely regarded as insignificant, and scholars believe that this is primarily because Field never grasped formal structure in large-scale works. Piggott holds Clementi accountable for this compositional deficiency, suggesting that under his apprenticeship, Field passed many hours demonstrating Clementi pianos for potential customers, as opposed to tending to his compositional duties. His residence in Russia, during which he largely remained absent from musical press, has put Field scholarship in a vulnerable position. It has also meant that Field researchers have taken too literally any available sources. In recognition of this is the weight that Fétis' comments have held in Field historiography.

Branson, for instance, briefly considers Field's Seventh Concerto, but is significantly guided by Fétis' assessment; which was based on Field's performance of the work — not the score. Branson writes:

The seventh [*sic*] Concerto is the one of which the French [*sic*] critic Fétis, wrote in 1833 that it was "diffuse, but full of happy ideas". This concerto contains undeniably Field's riches, as well as some of his most somber, material. As Fétis saw, the shaping is the less satisfactory part of the work [...] the ideas which Fétis called 'happy', and which are an extension of Field's range, do indeed abound. It is unfortunate that they should be fitted into an unsatisfactory structure, the recurring aspect which has led to so much of Field's music being forgotten and the importance of his innovations overlooked<sup>29</sup>.

Similarly, Piggott feels that the «first movement has some claim to be the most interesting, if not the most successful, of his extended pieces [...] The extremely episodic character of Field's movement is both its most original feature and its principal weakness. Despite many incidental beauties, it fails as a whole»<sup>30</sup>. Unlike Fétis, Piggott did not have the option to experience Field perform this work, and therefore compensate for such weakness. Yet he continues that:

The Seventh Concerto was an immediate success with the Parisian public — so much so that Field was induced to repeat it at one of his recitals in Pape's salon, in February, 1833, though on that occasion he played it unaccompanied... It is not, however, one of his best concertos, and, despite the affection in which it used to be held by

---

<sup>29</sup> BRANSON, David. *Op. cit.* (see note 12), pp. 130, 138.

<sup>30</sup> PIGGOTT, Patrick. *Op. cit.* (see note 13), pp. 177, 179.

Charles Hallé, and other pianists of his generation, it gradually fell into the desuetude which it merits rather more than several of Field's earlier essays in concerto form<sup>31</sup>.

One immediate issue must be raised: having cited all the reviews of Field's concerts available to me, the source Piggott is using is not clear, for the repetition of this concerto was not noted by either Fétis or d'Ortigue. Piggott, like Fétis believe that this concerto is not exemplary of all the other concerti by Field, while it is interesting to note that subsequently, this concerto was highly regarded by later generations. Of particular significance in both Piggott's and Branson's research, however, is that they mirror Fétis, or rather, a translation of Fétis' review.

For example, having consulted the original article in *La Revue Musicale* 9<sup>th</sup> February 1833 — cited above — it appears as though the translation that has been in circulation for many decades is in fact inaccurate. Instead of Fétis labelling Field's Seventh Concerto as 'full of happy ideas', he in fact thought it to lack satisfactory ideas. Had this point been noted, would Branson and Piggott have rejected Field's concerto wholly? Has Field retained his reputation as a pianist on Fétis' behalf too? Yet again, Piggott and Branson serve to demonstrate the role that 'man-made' images have played in Field historiography. Nevertheless, the critical tone of this concerto lingers. If, however, this work remained popular during Halle's time<sup>32</sup>, as Piggott suggests, and if Fétis review was not overtly negative, it is worth considering Fétis' position on musical life in Paris, and also the point at which Field's Seventh Concerto began to suffer substantial neglect.

One way of achieving this is to consider context for Fétis' review. According to Katharine Ellis, «Fétis' aim in setting up the *Revue Musicale* was primarily didactic», and «for Fétis, Mozart represented the summit and the limit of musical art»<sup>33</sup>. This, as Ellis remarked, produced a history «in which Mozart stood as the peak of two centuries of achievement flanked by decadence on the one hand and music based on an incomplete harmonic system (i.e. before 1600) on the other»<sup>34</sup>. Even when the *Revue* changed ownership from Fétis to Maurice Schlesinger, to become *La Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, Ellis notes that Fétis appears to have acquired the role of «the critical guiding light of the journal»<sup>35</sup>. The *Gazette's* view of the concerto eleven years after Field's performance suggests that it was a notion upon which Fétis had potentially built and contributed even in 1833; as Ellis remarks, reviews in the *Gazette* demanded that «the concerto or concert piece with orchestra should be more than a loosely connected series of bravura passages, sparsely accompanied with little thought to orchestral technique»<sup>36</sup>.

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 181.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Hallé (1819-1895).

<sup>33</sup> ELLIS, Katharine. *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: la Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris, 1834-1880*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 164.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*.

We are now in a position to consider Field's Seventh Concerto in relation to Fétis review. Fétis makes clear that this concerto, unlike its predecessors, was not exemplary of Field's endeavours in the genre. Indeed, of the seven concerti this is the only one written in a minor key, the pathetic key of C minor; which was so common at this time. It is the longest work of all the concerti and the first movement contains a «dislodged slow movement», as Julian Horton puts it, which is in fact Field's Twelfth Nocturne: this work was extolled by Schumann, and its influence is easy to identify in his own concerto<sup>37</sup>. The nocturne represented a post-classical style, demonstrating that Field was breaking away from convention, while a topical analysis of this concerto shows all the signs of Field's musical environment, that is, the struggle as a domestic and public pianist/composer. This work is certainly very different from Field's First Concerto, which Piggott claims Field's played in Paris in 1802, and perhaps for Fétis it was more similar to the virtuosity that was prevalent in Paris at that time; while Field's playing remained true to the old school, a school that Fétis promoted. From this perspective, it seems less likely that Field failed as a composer, but rather, Fétis had a hidden agenda. This does not explain the neglect of Field's concerti in general. Subsequently, Piggott and Branson have taken Fétis' comment one step further by using it in a context that regards Field as having never excelled as a composer of large-scale works. Retrospectively Fétis' review gains additional weight not only because of Piggott and Branson, but because by the twentieth century theoretical frameworks for the concerto orbited the Viennese Classical model, which, taken out of context, supported Fétis' claim for Field's Seventh Concerto as 'unclear'. Considering this work was performed by Hallé and his contemporaries, it is likely that Field's Seventh Concerto did not suffer neglect until the end of the nineteenth century at least. At a glance, therefore, Fétis appears as an astute critic, and Field, whose concerti in general were praised — though Piggott and Branson believe Field to have excelled in this area — was merely a composer out of touch with the most recent innovations, towards the end of his career. Looking beyond Field and the reviews, it is clear that other issues filled the background, which consequently affected the main subject. At this point we begin to assimilate the extent to which contrast permeates both Field's contemporary and posthumous receptions. The Parisian images, however, warrant more consideration.

## CONTRASTS

The first point to consider is the manner in which Field was introduced to Paris on both occasions. In 1802 his potential visit was hinted at in private correspondence, while in 1832 his arrival had been announced months in advance in Parisian press. The perceptions of Field associated with these introductions also varied considerably. On his initial visit Field is considered «a very promising genius», while on his return he is primarily perceived as a veteran.

---

<sup>37</sup> For more information on this influence see Julian Horton, 'John Field and the Alternative History of Concerto First-Movement Form', *Music and Letters* vol 92, 2011, pp 43-83.

For this reason, Field, in 1802, enters the Parisian musical world as representative of the most recent trends in piano performance, a city where his works would later be disseminated, while in 1832 Field's reputation was primarily built through publications, and he was regarded as symbolic of a soon-to-be forgotten past. The second significant point to consider is that Field had come from a very public orientated concert environment in 1802, and even though he did not stop performing in public in the intermittent years, the name Field had become increasingly associated with a domestic market. Contrast extended to Field's programmes: although reference is made to Bach and Handel in 1802, Piggott claims that it is likely he performed his First Concerto too, while in 1832–1833 Field performed his Seventh and last concerto. Field's First and Seventh Concerti reflect Field's compositional style at both ends of the spectrum, while later criticism reflects changes in musical life. Another point is that Field had come from the leading city for music in 1802, while in 1832 he was entering the now leading musical city. Glancing from one image to the other, it would seem that Field reached his zenith sometime after 1802, and declined thereafter, but if we are to consider the thirty years that coincides with this contrast, it is clear that it reveals as much about the development of musical life in Paris during this period than it does about Field.

For instance, Field was a pianist/composer, but by this time the pianist/interpreter began to dominate. A 'true' virtuoso was recognised as a composer as well as a pianist, and in this respect Field triumphed. Notwithstanding that Field was often credited as making the piano sing, or whose playing was akin to a singing style, which proved popular in Paris: in relation to Thalberg, for instance, Gooley notes that «Thalberg's vocality was the secret of his immense success in Paris» because «he had come to Paris at a time when the Parisian publics had not yet had a depth of experience with instrumental music. They remained voice-centred, opera-centred and nothing could have disposed them better to Thalberg's aesthetic of singing on the piano»<sup>38</sup>. Field was not in a position, however, to become an interpreter, particularly not in line with Liszt, or Thalberg. Field had established himself in Russia, and his reputation relied heavily on the dissemination of works through publishers and his teaching and performances in Russia. While Field was aware of his audiences, and at one stage was classified as a travelling virtuoso, the quantity of concerts and the extent of travelling for the reigning virtuosi at this time exceeded the lifestyle to which Field had become accustomed. Moreover, the musical press had become a medium for educating the public, the same medium that dictated the reception of Field on his return by way or promoting the past.

Taken out of context, these reviews have been used to support an image of Field attempting one last tour before retiring, of a composer who could not write concerti, of a pianist who was out of his depth thirty years on, and as a musical figure who was now a novelty from the past; in all, a minor composer. From another perspective, these reviews highlight Field's admirable performance by way of attacking empty virtuosity, show that compositionally Field's concerti were

---

<sup>38</sup> GOOLEY, Dana. *Op. cit.* (see note 12), p. 35.

of particular importance and that in his Seventh Concerto he had moved with the times. These images more accurately show that virtuosity had moved into another generation, one that relied on visual effects, and one that Field did not wish to enter. Field did not suffer from being an old composer, but rather, musical life entered a new phase. For Gooley, «virtuosity is about shifting borders [...] Once this act of transgression is complete, the border shifts, and the boundaries of the possible are redrawn. If the performer does not cross a new, more challenging one, he will no longer be perceived as a virtuoso»<sup>39</sup>. The musician as entrepreneur, to adopt the title of William Weber's book, was not foreign to Field but it seems that less of a demand had been made on Field by audiences at the turn of the nineteenth century, than in the 1830s. Yet Field's tour in 1832/1833 shows clearly that he was a significant figure. As Gooley remarks, «a virtuoso was not just somebody to listen to, but someone to talk about, a figure around whom people could negotiate style and status. This was especially true when the virtuoso had not yet been heard in the city»<sup>40</sup>. It was hardly surprising then, that Field's concerts were always well attended, or even that Field scheduled tours in Paris.

Contrast in the context of Field's Parisian images is better described through the *Correspondance des Amateurs Musiciens*, one of the few journals in circulation at the turn of the nineteenth century. Its objective, as the title suggests, was to communicate with amateur musicians. Although Field had just come from England, a country in which musical activity was largely associated with and criticised as amateur and commercial, the *Correspondance des Amateurs Musiciens* reflects the dominance of private activity, and the extent to which musical life had yet to progress in relation to London; in relation to journalism in particular. For example, the *Correspondance* provided information on the most popular instruments in use, the best methods and graded difficulty of works for studying instruments. It also contained analysis and notices on dead and living composers, while providing musicians and music dealers with the opportunity of advertising. All of this had been firmly established in London. The following is typical:

La Correspondance des Amateurs Musiciens deals with all the instruments in use in society. It lists the best methods written and the works of gradual difficulty for the study of instruments. It continually supplies lovers of both vocal and instrumental music with works that were already published or that will be published in the future... By an analysis and well thought-out commentary, the Correspondance also helps them anticipate the enjoyment as well as the level of difficulty of said works. It contains notices on composers, past and present. It sometimes includes melodies for voice with accompaniment by harp or piano. These airs are chosen amongst the most pleasant there is, the rarest or the newest. The Correspondance is open, firstly to amateurs, composers and music shops, to advertise their works [...] they will be given such facilities they might wish for to advertise expensive works like sheet music, solfa, methods etc. Secondly, it will be open to string

---

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 59.

instrument manufacturers, to allow them to offer rare instruments, which they would like to part from at a good profit... These notices will on average cost two "sous" per line, and free for subscribers. Thirdly, the directors of shows in France and abroad will also be able to advertise vacant positions in their orchestra, looking for musicians to fill them, as well as those for all singing roles... Last but not least, amateurs and teachers will have the opportunity to place notices, letters and advertisement, which could be useful or agreeable to them. Finally, it will report on musicals by societies, public concerts and of new books<sup>41</sup>.

From this article, it seems that the music trade was beginning to be established, and that most music making happened in private settings. Compare this to an article published just before Field's arrival in Paris in 1832. It is written by Fétis and is taken from *La Revue Musicale*. He writes:

Classical publications.

Piano method of the music Conservatoire, new edition, reviewed and enhanced by L. Adam [...]

It has been about thirty years since Mr Adam published the first edition of his piano method. Since then four other editions of the same work have been sold out, selling around twenty-five thousand copies. What could I say for Mr Adam's behalf that could match such endorsement? A mediocre composition sometimes achieves ephemeral success which is followed by a deep oblivion; but when it is about a fundamental work. The opinion is not made so lightly, and one could say without hesitation that those which have sold twenty-five thousand copies must certainly have essential qualities. However, a lapse of thirty years brings with it changes in ideas, in style, and even in the manner of playing an instrument. The piano, more than any other instrument, has been experiencing, for about twenty years, variations not only in the style of pianists, but even in its structure [...]. These are considerations that have led Mr Adam to revise his work despite the approval that time has given it, and has brought to it the necessary modifications, both as a whole and in detail. This is sensible, and proves

---

<sup>41</sup> Correspondance des Amateurs Musiciens. Rédigée par le Ci. COCATRIZ, amateur. 27 novembre 1802: «La Correspondance des Amateurs Musiciens traite successivement de tous les instruments en usage dans la société. Elle indique les meilleures méthodes écrites et les ouvrages d'une difficulté graduée pour l'étude de ces instruments. Elle entretient continuellement les amateurs des ouvrages de musique vocale et instrumentale, qui ont paru et qui paroîtront à l'avenir. Par une analyse et des commentaires raisonnés, elle les met à même de préjuger tant de l'agrément que de plus ou moins de difficulté des dits ouvrages. Elle contient des notices sur les auteurs morts et vivans. On y insère, parfois, des airs de chant avec accompagnement de harpe ou de piano. Ces airs sont choisis parmi ce qu'il y a de plus agréable, de plus rare ou de plus nouveau. La Correspondance est ouverte, 1<sup>e</sup> AM.M. les amateurs, Auteurs et Marchands de Musique, pour y faire annoncer les ouvrages [...] Il leur sera donné telles facilités qu'ils désireront pour l'annonce des ouvrages chers, comme partitions, solfèges, méthodes, etc. 2<sup>e</sup> AM.M les luthiers, pour proposer les instruments rares et d'un grand prix, dont ils veulent se défaire avantageusement. Ces annonces seront faites moyennant deux sous par ligne, et gratuitement pour les abonnés. 3<sup>e</sup> AM.M les Directeurs de spectacles de France et de l'étranger, pour les annonces de places vacantes dans leurs orchestres; demandes de musiciens pour les remplir, et de sujets tous les rôles chantés. 4<sup>e</sup> AM.M. les amateurs et professeurs, pour l'insertion de toutes les notices, lettres et annonces qui leur sont utiles ou agréables. Enfin, on y rendra compte des pièces en musique des concerts de société, des concerts publics et des livres nouveaux».

that Mr Adam has progressed with the century. He has understood that what is good can always be better and that it is always to the artist's advantage to get ahead of criticism than to resist it... He has thus decided to change and perfect a number of sections of his work, and it is the result of this task about which I was asked to bring to you today. Finally, a type of dictionary featuring excerpts of works by Cramer, Clementi, Dussek, and Steibelt was updated with more recent features taken from the works of Hummel, Moscheles, Kalkbrenner, Field, Ries, Czerny, Herz, Bertini, Zimmerman and even of Mr Adam himself. At the end of this collection of works, one can find, like in the first edition, some fugues by Mozart, Handel and Bach, similar to the method of 81... Adam has taken in a breath of fresh air and youth, which without doubt, will continue to keep this work in the public favour and will maintain his success for a long time. FÉTIS<sup>42</sup>.

Fétis' article is significantly different and demonstrates not only the extent to which music criticism, and music trade had developed, but also the changes in pianism because of the piano and its effect on musical works and education. It is interesting to note that Field, as well as most of his contemporaries were included in this volume. Here the article has moved away from encouraging amateur musicians to perform to a way of educating these musicians and the public, while always updating material to suit the needs of the audience.

By the time Field was leaving Paris in 1833, however, there was concern about the progress of music in France. It appears to be targeted at professional musicians, who in turn impact the public:

What signifies music progress?

---

<sup>42</sup> *Revue Musicale*, 7 juillet 1832, pp. 183–184 : « Publications classiques. Méthode de piano du Conservatoire de musique, nouvelle édition, revue et augmentée par L. Adam [...] Il y a environ trente ans que M. Adam publia la première édition de sa Méthode de piano ; depuis lors quatre autres éditions du même ouvrage ont été épuisées, et l'on en a vendu environ vingt-cinq mille exemplaires. Que pourrais-je dire qui valût pour M. Adam un pareil témoignage en sa faveur ? Une composition médiocre obtient quelquefois un succès de vogue auquel succède un profond oubli ; mais lorsqu'il s'agit d'un ouvrage élémentaire, l'opinion ne se forme pas à la légère, et l'on peut dire hardiment que celui dont on a vendu vingt-cinq mille exemplaires a certainement des qualités essentielles. Cependant, trente années apportent des modifications dans les idées, dans le style de la musique et même dans la manière de jouer un instrument. Le piano, plus que tout autre, a éprouvé depuis environ vingt ans des variations non-seulement dans le style des pianistes, mais même dans la construction [...] Ce sont ces considérations qui ont déterminé M. Adam à revoir son ouvrage malgré la sanction que le temps lui avait donnée, et à modifier dans son ensemble et dans ses détails ce qui avait besoin de l'être. Cela est d'un bon esprit, et prouve que M. Adam a marché avec son siècle. Il a compris que ce qui est bien peut être mieux, et qu'il est toujours plus avantageux à un artiste de devancer la critique que de lui résister. Il a donc pris le parti de changer et de perfectionner plusieurs parties de son ouvrage, et c'est le résultat de son travail que je suis chargé d'annoncer aujourd'hui [...] Enfin l'espèce de dictionnaire de traits tirés des œuvres de Cramer, de Clementi, de Dussek et de Steibelt, a été renouvelé par des traits plus nouveaux pris dans les compositions de Hummel, de Moschelès, de Kalkbrenner, de Field, de Ries, de Czerni, de Henri Herz, de Bertini, de Pixis, de Zimmermann, et dans les œuvres mêmes de M. Adam. A la suite de cette collection de traits se trouvent, comme dans les premières éditions, quelques fugues de Mozart, de Handel et de Bach. Dans cet état, la méthode de 81. Adam a repris un air de fraîcheur et de jeunesse qui sans doute contribuera à conserver à cet ouvrage la faveur du public et prolongera long-temps son succès. FÉTIS ».

Progress is to move forward. Moving forward suggests a goal or a means: to know if music is moving forward, it is necessary therefore to determine the goal and observe if it is near the point of departure, that is to say, since art is made on three conditions: melody, harmony and rhythm.

Or, in compatibility with today, sensationalism is the object of music. The question seems therefore to boil down to knowing if the feeling produced by this art increases as one moves forward, and if it becomes more alive; but if it is put in these terms, one will arrive first of all at a negative answer. Indeed, if we consider the feelings developed by music from the sixteenth century in my historical concert, we will see that the best productions of our age do not know how to make something more lively. It is not an amateur, not an artist even those who have confessed to me that no concert (and what concert? A show of three and a half hours!) has made him experience such pleasure. It seems then, that firstly, for around three hundred years, notwithstanding the transformations of art, there has been no move towards a goal, no real progress. This conclusion is misrepresented nevertheless, as you will see later<sup>43</sup>.

The shift from popular music to works by older artists is evident here, and questions as to what is deemed progress and what it should be are posed. It is for these reasons that Field's performances were well received by critics and preferred over the more popular virtuosi. Yet one last look at musical life in Paris through the eyes of the music press is necessary. The critic is Hector Berlioz, and he is writing in 1837, the year of Field's death, about the work of past composers:

Some words about the ancient composers, and in particular Grétry.

Nothing is more discouraging for artists than to see how quickly works, even the most beautiful ones, are erased from public memory. Anything that is not part of the current repertoire for concerts and lyrical theatre is as good as void. If some men, whose admired works are more noticed than motivated, wishes to raise their voice in favour of the beautiful productions, maybe not of the last century but even just of the start of our own century, their complaints become a laughing stock for the majority of people «these are amateurs of an old generation, they

---

<sup>43</sup> *Revue Musicale*, 16 février 1833, p. 17 : «[Variétés] En quoi consistent les progrès de la musique? Progrès, c'est avancement. Avancement suppose un but et des moyens : pour savoir s'il y a avancement dans la musique, il faut donc déterminer le but et constate si l'on s'en est approché depuis le point de départ, c'est-à-dire, depuis que l'art s'est constitué sous les trois conditions de la mélodie, de l'harmonie et du rythme. Or, on s'accord généralement aujourd'hui sur ce point que la sensation est l'objet de la musique. La question semble donc se résumer à savoir si les sensations produites par cet art se multiplient à mesure qu'on avance et si elles deviennent plus vives ; mais si on la renfermait dans ces termes, on arriverait tout d'abord à une résolution négative. En effet, si nous considérons les sensations développées par la musique du seizième siècle dans mon concert historique, nous verrons que les meilleures productions de notre âge ne sauraient en faire naître de plus vives. Il n'est point d'amateur, point d'artiste même qui ne m'ait avoué que jamais concert (et quel concert ? une séance de trois heures et demie !) ne lui avait fait éprouver tant de plaisir. Il semblerait donc, au premier abord, que depuis trois cents ans environs nonobstant les transformations de l'art, il n'y a point eu d'avancement vers le but, point de progrès véritables. Cette conclusion serait fausse toutefois : je le ferai voir tout à l'heure ».

say, if one listened to them one would believe that we can make nothing today that could reach what our ancestors have made ». Perhaps alas! In a very few number of years, the advocates of the current era will be even more rare, and it will be more difficult for them to defend the epithet of the *bad* old times, due to the crowds of short-lived works with which we have become inundated<sup>44</sup>.

By the time of Field's death, therefore, music had definitively taken another direction, and it seems that if composer/pianists like Field were not there to secure their position, they would be quickly replaced.

## CONCLUSION

Scholars have been quick to notice the difference in musical life in Paris during Field's tours, but they have been less quick to consider the effects of these changes on Field reception, attributing instead the change in reception as evidence of Field's position as a minor composer in musical life. It is now clear that this perception is neither accurate, nor straightforward. This is because the Parisian images of Field have never been examined as a unit, and assessing them together here suggests that there is a strong correlation between Field's posthumous neglect and his reception in Paris in 1832–1833. It is also clear that Field scholars have looked too closely at Field on these occasions, and not at his context, thereby altering his true Parisian image. Although a lot of groundwork has been undertaken in Field research, it is still very much in its infancy, and it is necessary to revisit and collate not only the Parisian images of Field but also as many images of Field in the intermittent years and to situate him in a broader context. It seems that for now, Field research has primarily been detached from the place and time in which it made its first appearance. In relation to the *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* Ellis writes that «it can [...] represent no more than a thin slice of history. Yet within this slice lie the foundations of many twentieth-century assumptions about Western art music, its conventions and the relative merits of its composers»<sup>45</sup>. In this respect it can also only represent a thin slice of Field's career, but if it has had such an impact on music in general, then Field scholarship would undoubtedly be affected. Regardless the posthumous review

---

<sup>44</sup> *Revue et Gazette Musicale*, 5 février 1837, p. 43 : «Quelques mots sur les anciens compositeurs, et sur Grétry en particulier. Rien n'est plus décourageant pour les artistes, que de voir avec quelle rapidité les œuvres, même les plus belles, s'effacent de la mémoire du public. Tout ce qui ne fait pas partie du répertoire courant des concerts et des théâtres lyriques est à peu près comme non avenu. Si quelques hommes, dont les admirations sont d'autant plus constatées qu'elles sont mieux motivées, veulent élever la voix en faveur des belles productions, je ne dirai pas du siècle dernier, mais seulement du commencement de notre siècle, leurs réclamations deviennent un objet de risée pour la plus grande partie, "ce sont des amateurs du bon vieux temps, dit-on ; à les en croire, on ne fait rien aujourd'hui qui approche de ce que faisaient nos pères ; c'est une manie". Peut-être, hélas! dans très-peu d'années, les prôneurs de l'époque actuelle seront-ils encore bien plus rares, et leur sera-t-il plus difficile, grâce à la foule de productions éphémères dont nous sommes inondés, de la défendre de l'épithète de *mauvais* vieux temps [...] H. Berlioz».

<sup>45</sup> ELLIS, Katharine. *Op. cit.* (see note 33), p. 1.

of Field in Paris, it is clear that his contemporary reception there was largely positive. As *La Revue et gazette musicale* noted in 1837, « The art music yet again bemoans a new loss, that of the renowned pianists John Field, who has just died in Moscow»<sup>46</sup>. To return to the opening quote, «every image embodies a way of seeing. “It seems therefore that these Parisian images of Field embodied a way of seeing Parisian musical life as opposed to demonstrating reasons for Field’s neglect.

---

<sup>46</sup> *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, 26 février 1837, p. 75: «L’art musical a encore à déplorer une nouvelle perte, celle du célèbre pianiste John-Field, qui vient de mourir à Moscou».