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Luigi Cherubini

Course in Counterpoint and Fugue

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Introduction to English translation

Maxime Margollé

What is counterpoint? The first treatises on counterpoint appear at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The oldest *Compendium de discantu mensurabili* was compiled by a Cistercian monk named Pétrus c.1336.¹ This new science came from the old descant (*discantus*), which was characterised by an almost note against note writing, favouring contrary motion between the parts. These are measured according to the six rhythmic modes of modal notation. In this system, the fifth is considered as a consonance, just like the unison and the octave. Gradually, counterpoint became the only pedagogical method for teaching composition, and, from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century, treatises on counterpoint all resembled each other in both their formulation and their content. They assumed a prior knowledge of plainchant and presented two types of counterpoint:

Simple counterpoint (*contrapunctus simplex*), practised note against note, which only admits consonant intervals,

Figurative counterpoint (or florid counterpoint), which sets two or more notes against one and is distinguished by the use of dissonances ‘pleasantly painful to the ear’.²

Up to the end of the seventeenth century, the rules of counterpoint were as follows:

Beginning and end

1. ‘Every beginning must be realised by a perfect consonance, namely, unison, octave, fifteenth or else fifth or twelfth.’³
2. ‘Every melody must end and begin with a perfect consonance.’⁴
3. ‘The penultimate consonance must always be imperfect, and this for reasons of euphony.’⁵

¹ Johannes Wolf, *Ein Beitrag zur Diskantlehre des 14. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 15 in *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1913–1914), 505–534.

² Sieur de la Voye-Mignot, *Traité de musique* (Paris: Adrian le Roy et Robert Ballard, 1656), 83. ‘qui blessent agréablement l’oreille’.

³ Jean Yssandon, *Traité de musique pratique* (Paris: Adrian le Roy et Robert Ballard, 1582; repr. Geneva: Minkoff, 1972), 9r0. ‘Tout commencement doit être réalisé par consonance parfaite, c’est à dire soit par unisson, octave, quinzième, ou bien par quinte, ou douzième’.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9v0. ‘tout chant doit finir et commencer par une consonance parfaite’.

⁵ *Scriptorum de musica medii aevi nova series a Gerbertina altera*, ed. Edmond de Coussemaker, vol. 3 (Paris: Durand, 1869; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1963), 62. ‘La consonance pénultième doit toujours être imparfaite, et cela par raison d’euphonie’.

Perfect consonances

4. 'Two perfect consonances of the same kind cannot immediately follow each other either ascending or descending: as are two unisons, two octaves, two fifteenths, two fifths or two twelfths.'⁶
5. 'Two perfect consonances, namely, two fifths or two octaves, can be made provided that their movements are contrary, that is to say that one part rises and the other descends.'⁷
6. 'Several dissimilar perfect consonances which go up or down can be placed in counterpoint, such as a fifth after the unison or the octave, and the octave after the fifth.'⁸
7. 'Between two perfect concordances of the same kind, [...] at least one [different] consonance must be written.'⁹

Imperfect consonances

8. 'The minor third requires a unison after it and the major third a fifth after it. The minor sixth requires a fifth after it and the major sixth requires an octave after it.'¹⁰
9. 'One can place two, three or more [imperfect] consonances in one's counterpoint; a [perfect] consonance should then follow.'¹¹

Contrary to popular belief still current today, in the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance and up to the seventeenth century, counterpoint was not to be identified as the horizontal aspect of music, but as the means of connecting the consonances in a pleasant way. The linear aspect was likened to plainsong. Consequently, up to Rameau, we distinguish counterpoint from harmony as follows: the first is based on the relationship between two notes of the same importance (an interval), the second on the relationship between three notes (a chord). In 1722 Rameau set out the codification of the harmonic notions acquired in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

⁶ Jean Yssandon, *Traité de musique*, 9r. 'Deux consonances parfaites de même genre, ne peuvent immédiatement se suivre soit en montant, soit en descendant : comme sont deux unissons, deux octaves, deux quinzièmes, deux quintes, ou deux douzièmes'.

⁷ Ibid., 9v. 'Deux consonances parfaites, à savoir deux quintes ou deux octaves, se peuvent faire pourvu que leur mouvement soit contraire, c'est-à-dire qu'une partie monte et que l'autre descende'.

⁸ Ibid., 9r-9v. 'Plusieurs consonances parfaites dissemblables qui montent ou descendent, se peuvent mettre au contrepoint : comme une quinte après l'unisson ou l'octave, et l'octave après la quinte'.

⁹ Ibid., 9r. 'Entre deux concordances parfaites de même genre, [...] à tout le moins une consonance [différente] doit être mise'.

¹⁰ Anonymus, *Tractatus de contrapuncto* (Ms. Venice, lat. VIII.82, coll. 3047), ed. Gilbert Reaney, *Corpus Scriptorum de Musica* 39 (Neuhausen: American Institute of Musicology, Hänssler, 1997), 70. 'La tierce de ton et demi ton requiert un unisson après elle, et celle de deux tons une quinte après elle. La sixte de demi ton avec quinte requiert après elle une quinte, et celle d'un ton avec quinte requiert une octave après elle'.

¹¹ Edmond de Coussemaker, *Scriptorum de musica*, 61. 'On peut, dans son contrepoint, placer deux, trois ou davantage de consonances [imparfaites], une consonance [parfaite] doit ensuite suivre'.

in a treatise.¹² This had the effect of separating harmony from counterpoint. It is according to this new distinction that Cherubini writes his treatise, as he indicates in the introduction.

Biographical sketch

1. Childhood and education

Luigi Cherubini was born on 14 September 1760 in Florence, Italy. When he wrote the biographical preface of his work catalogue in 1831, Cherubini gave 8 and 14 September as his dates of birth, but the records of the baptistery of San Giovanni state that he was born on 14 September (and baptised the following day). As Arthur Pougin indicates,¹³ Cherubini probably believed for a good part of his life that he was born on 8 September. Cherubini was the tenth of twelve children. He took his first music lessons at the age of six with his father Bartolomeo Cherubini, maestro al cembalo at the Teatro della Pergola in Florence. In 1769 he began the study of counterpoint and composition with Bartolomeo Felici (1695–1776) and his son Alessandro (1742–1772) at their school. Cherubini continued his musical studies in 1776 with Pietro Bizzarri and Giuseppe Castrucci. In 1778 he left Florence for Milan to follow the teaching of Giuseppe Sarti (1729–1802). Aged 18, he had already composed several works, including extracts from masses set for solo voices, chorus and orchestra, a cantata, *La pubblica felicità*, performed at Florence Cathedral in 1774 in honour of Duke Leopold of Tuscany (later Emperor Leopold II), and an intermezzo, *Il giocatore* (1775).¹⁴ Through his apprenticeship with Sarti in Bologna and Milan between 1778 and 1781, Cherubini learnt counterpoint and the style of dramatic music. In 1779 Sarti entered a competition to become maestro di cappella of Milan Cathedral. His victory (with an eight-voice mass for the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the patron saint of the cathedral) and the successful revival of his *Le gelosie villane* at La Scala greatly enhanced his reputation. With this new job, Sarti's workload increased a great deal. He was commissioned to write a number of operas for Florentine and Milanese theatres, so he asked Cherubini to contribute the arias for the secondary characters. Cherubini wrote:

About the year 1777 or 1778, I obtained a pension from Grand Duke Leopold to continue my studies and perfect myself under the celebrated Giuseppe Sarti, with whom I worked for three or four years. By the counsels and lessons of that great master, I mastered counterpoint and the elements of dramatic music. At his side, he set me to compose – as exercises for myself, as well as to relieve him in his own labours – all the airs of the secondary parts in the operas he composed.¹⁵

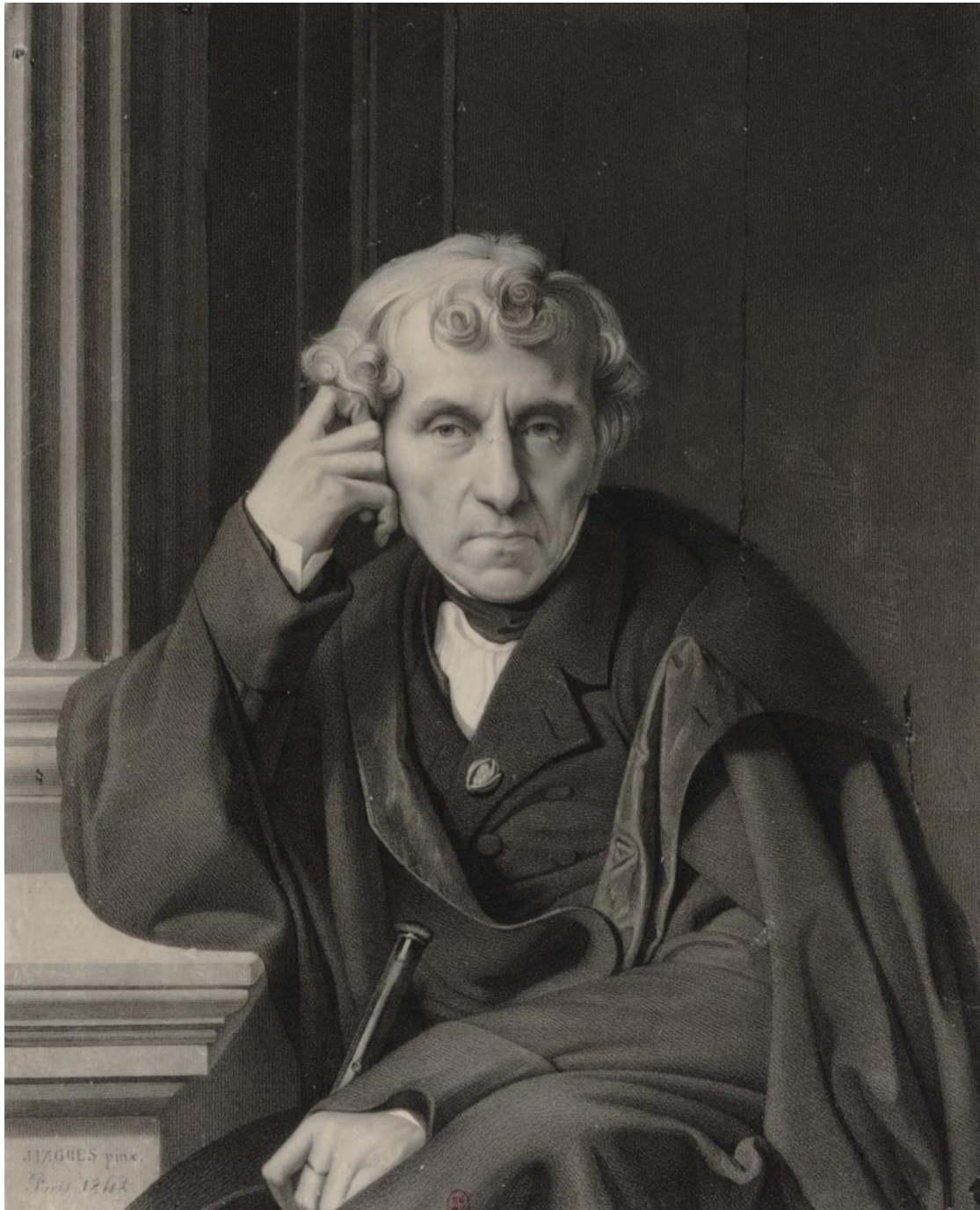
¹² Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels* (Paris: De l'imprimerie, 1722).

¹³ Arthur Pougin, 'Cherubini: sa vie, ses œuvres, son rôle artistique', *Le Ménestrel*, 4 September 1881 to 15 January 1882; 26 March to 17 December 1882.

¹⁴ Michael Fend, 'Cherubini, Luigi', *Grove Music Online* (2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000053110>, accessed 24 February 2022.

¹⁵ *Notice des manuscrits autographes de la musique composée par feu M.-L.-C.-Z.-S. Cherubini*, ed. Auguste Bottée de Toulmon (Paris, 1842; repr. London: H. Baron, 1967), 1. 'Vers l'année 1777 ou 1778, j'obtins une pension du grand-duc Léopold pour continuer mes études et me perfectionner sous le célèbre Joseph Sarti, avec lequel j'ai travaillé pendant trois ou quatre ans. C'est par les conseils et les leçons de ce grand maître que je me suis formé dans le contre-point et dans la musique dramatique. Étant auprès de lui, il me faisait composer, pour m'exercer et le soulager dans ses travaux, tous les airs des seconds rôles dans les opéras qu'il composait'.

This apprenticeship with Giuseppe Sarti was a great opportunity for Cherubini. He was able to learn the profession of composer in the safest way: he had the opportunity to compose without risk and without effective responsibility, since all the works were staged under Sarti's name. During this period of a few years, he was able to acquire stage experience and knowledge of orchestral effects, and he learned to develop his ideas by training in the use of lyrical declamation. While in Bologna and Milan, Cherubini also wrote some 20 unaccompanied antiphons and litanies for four, five and six parts in the style of Palestrina, and made a foray into instrumental music with six sonatas for harpsichord dedicated to a Florentine noble.



Luigi Cherubini (1760–1842) by Ingres, c.1842

2. From Italy to England and France (1784–1789)

In 1782 Cherubini left Sarti and returned to Florence, where he composed an opera in three acts, *Il Mesenzio re d'Etruria*, staged in Florence in September 1782. Between 1782 and 1784, he wrote a series of mostly serious operas based on historical plots for various Italian cities, including Alessandria, Florence, Livorno, Rome and Venice. His early interest in individual orchestral colouring came to the fore in the Sinfonia for *L'Alessandro nell'Indie* (1784), where he incorporated a slow section consisting of viola, cello and bassoon soli with accompanying strings; other parts of the opera feature solo instruments. Furthermore, the quotation of a musical passage in a later part of the drama enhances the opera's structure.

During Cherubini's last stay in Florence, in 1784, he composed *Ninfa crudel*, a madrigal for five voices and basso continuo. On the original score, given by Cherubini to the Bibliothèque nationale de France,¹⁶ the author indicates:

This madrigal is composed according to the system of Father Valloti of Padua, who admits (rigorously treating the counterpoint) that the simple chord and the compound chord can be inverted as many times as each has degrees, and the unity of each inversion can be, without fear of error, located in the bass as a foundation, and that, moreover, the dissonances to which the two aforementioned chords are susceptible can also be reversed, and situated indiscriminately in all the parts.¹⁷

This work is the first major example of Cherubini's mastery of counterpoint. The note added by Cherubini gives us an idea of his training in this area. At that time, he was the heir to a musical tradition stemming from the two most prominent Italian theorists and teachers: Giovanni Battista Martini (1706–1784),¹⁸ from Bologna, and Francesco Antonio Vallotti, maestro di capella at the Basilica del Santo in Padua, who were Sarti's teachers.

In 1784 Cherubini left Florence and joined the King's Theatre company in London as house composer. One of his first works in that role was a pasticcio entitled *Demetrio* (1785), which consisted partly of music from his Italian operas, and featured the recently appointed King's Theatre singers Girolamo Crescentini (1762–1846) and Adriana Ferrarese (1759–1803). During the winter season of 1785–1786, Cherubini also held the position of court composer, on a salary of £224.¹⁹ In 1785 Cherubini spent the summer in Paris, where he befriended Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755–1824). From 1786 to 1792, Cherubini shared an apartment with Viotti, who introduced him to the French queen, Marie Antoinette, the sister of Duke Leopold of Tuscany, and to the writers Jean François Marmontel and Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian, who were later to become his librettists.

¹⁶ Manuscript held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France under the number VM7-11832.

¹⁷ 'Questo Madrigale è composto secondo il sistema del Padre Valloti da Padova, il quale ammette (rigorosamente trattando il contrappunto,) che l'accordo semplice, e l'accordo composto possono essere rivoltati tante volte quanto ciascuno ha di termini, e che l'unita di ogni rivolto puol essere, senza tema d'errore, situata al Basso come fondamento, e che inoltre le Dissonanze onde i due predetti accordi sono suscettibili, possono essere parimente rivoltate, e situate indistintamente in tutte le parti.'

¹⁸ Padre Giovanni Battista Martini, was an Italian theorist, composer and teacher. He is one of the most famous figures in eighteenth-century music. Many leading composers of the eighteenth century, such as Mozart, Grétry, Jommelli and J. C Bach, followed his teaching.

¹⁹ Michael Fend, 'Cherubini, Luigi', *Grove Music Online* (2001), <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000053110>, accessed 24 February 2022.

3. Paris, from the Revolution to the Restoration (1789–1816)

In 1788 Cherubini composed his first work commissioned by the Paris Opéra, *Démophon*, which was coolly received. In 1789 Léonard-Alexis Autié (1751–1820) and Viotti founded the Théâtre de Monsieur, where Cherubini served as musical director and composed mainly insertion arias and ensembles. One of the aims of this new theatre was to bring Italian opera to Paris. When the Théâtre de Monsieur moved to rue Feydeau, in 1791, Cherubini signed a four-year contract stipulating that he would continue to compose insertion arias and ensembles for a monthly salary of 500 livres, but would also write two French operas a year for 2000 livres each, and would receive another 4000 livres for each additional opera.

In July 1791, *Lodoïska*, a ‘comédie héroïque’ in three acts, became his first international success. According to Fétis and Thurner, this opéra-comique, along with Méhul’s *Euphrosine et Coradin*, launched a ‘musical revolution in French music’.²⁰ Starting with *Lodoïska*, Cherubini became one of the most influential composers in Paris. During the French Revolution and the Consulate, he composed some of his most important works: *Eliza, ou le Voyage aux glaciers du Mont Saint Bernard* (1794), *Médée* (1797) and *Les Deux journées, ou le Porteur d’eau* (1800). In 1795 he was employed as a teaching inspector, along with Gossec, Méhul, Grétry and Lesueur, at the Conservatoire de Musique, newly founded by Bernard Sarrette. In that post, he helped to develop several teaching methods.

The success of Cherubini’s works soon spread beyond France. *Lodoïska*, *Médée* and *Les Deux journées* were acclaimed in Vienna, for example, which Cherubini visited in 1805. While there, he met Beethoven, on whom the influence of Cherubini’s works of the revolutionary decade has been widely commented on since the nineteenth century, especially in the case of *Fidelio*.

During the Empire, Cherubini composed less. After his stay in Vienna, the signs of depression that had appeared around 1801 worsened. Under Napoleon, he resumed the composing of operas and official music, although the emperor did not like the music Cherubini wrote for his marriage to Marie-Louise of Austria in 1810 and the birth of their son in 1811. In 1812 he composed the opera *Les Abencérages* and the *Missa solemnis* in D minor, perhaps in the hope of replacing Joseph Haydn at the Esterházy court.

4. The last years (1816–1842)

During the Restoration, Cherubini received more official recognition. In 1816, alongside Lesueur, he was appointed superintendent of the royal chapel, a post that he kept until its dissolution by Louis-Philippe in 1830. Until 1822, he composed almost exclusively sacred music (including a *Requiem* in C minor and a Mass in G major for the coronation of Louis XVIII). That year, he was appointed Director of the École royale de musique et de déclamation (the new name of the Conservatoire during the Restoration). On 22 July 1833, he premiered his last opera, his most ambitious work, *Ali-Baba et les quarante voleurs*. The work was a flop. Hector Berlioz judged it to be his weakest opera, and Schumann considered him a fool to have followed the Parisian taste.

²⁰ See Adolphe Turner, *Les Transformations de l’opéra-comique* (Paris: Castel, 1865), 81; also François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, vi:58.

As director of the Conservatoire, Cherubini did everything to protect the institution from political tribulations. Anxious to strengthen the quality of teaching, he instituted the system of entrance and final exams, refined the official teaching methods, strengthened the teaching of singing and created many new classes, including Keyboard for Singers (1822), Piano for Women (preparatory class, 1822), Piano for Men (preparatory class, 1827), Harp (1825), Double Bass (1827), Trumpet (1833), Piston Horn (1833) and Trombone (1836). He also revived the concerts of the Student Orchestra (1823), which led to the creation of the Société des concerts du conservatoire, entrusted to François-Antoine Habeneck (1828), and established the lyric and dramatic ‘exercises’ (1841).

Cherubini retired from the Conservatoire on 8 February 1842 and died on 15 March that year.

The sources for the *Cours*

Who wrote the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue*? That is the question one can ask when reading some of Fétis’s works. Indeed, in the second edition of his *Traité du contrepoint et de la fugue*, he writes:

About ten years after this treatise of counterpoint and fugue appeared [that of Fétis, published in 1825], a work of the same kind was published under the name of Cherubini. It would be unfair to attribute to this great master the imperfections which one notices there, for it is certain that he never had the thought of writing such a book. He had only formed a collection of examples for the students who were instructed by him, and it was long afterwards that an editor envisioned collecting those examples into a body of work, relying on the artist’s justly acquired fame to ensure the success of the venture. A text was written by a foreign hand with a great deal of negligence, and the gaps were hastily filled.²¹

While François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871) tried to give greater legitimacy to the first edition of his own treatise, which, according to him, was commissioned by Cherubini himself,²² he questioned the authorship of Cherubini’s *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* just a few years after its author’s death. In this introduction, Fétis also emphasises the report made by the Académie des beaux-arts before the publication of the first edition of his *Traité*.²³ Was it out of a need to justify the changes made in the second edition of his treatise, to encourage his students to read his work (rather than that of Cherubini, whose influence extended far beyond France),²⁴ or simply to explain the real genesis of Cherubini’s *Cours*? A few years later, he wrote the following:

²¹ François-Joseph Fétis, *Traité du contrepoint et de la fugue contenant l'exposé analytique des règles de la composition musicale depuis deux jusqu'à huit parties réelles*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1846), p. III. ‘Dix ans environ après que ce traité de contrepoint et de la fugue eut paru [celui de Fétis, publié en 1825], un ouvrage du même genre a été publié sous le nom de Cherubini. Il serait injuste d’attribuer à ce grand maître les imperfections qu’on y remarque, car il est certain qu’il n’a jamais eu la pensée d’écrire un livre semblable. Il avait seulement formé un recueil d’exemples pour les élèves qui furent instruits par ses soins, et ce fut longtemps après, qu’un éditeur imagina de rassembler ces exemples en un corps d’ouvrage, comptant sur la célébrité justement acquise de l’artiste pour assurer le succès de la spéculation. Un texte fut écrit par une main étrangère avec beaucoup de négligence et les lacunes furent comblées à la hâte’.

²² In order to replace Reicha’s *Treatise on High Composition*, which Cherubini – again according to Fétis – received with ‘disgust’. See François-Joseph Fétis, *Traité du contrepoint*, p. I.

²³ Indeed, unlike Reicha’s *Treatise*, the first edition of Fétis’s *Traité du contrepoint et de la fugue* was ‘approved’ by the composers of the music section of the French Academy of Fine Arts, which Cherubini belonged to.

²⁴ In 1846 Fétis was director of the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and professor of counterpoint.

Perfect Master, when it came to showing by example the application of the precept, he could hardly ever find the explanation for it. Woe to the student who did not understand half a word; for the whole word rarely came to him. This difficulty in speaking, concerning things with which he was familiar, was distressing for him: it made him angry at the student who had caused him this embarrassment. Auber, Halévy and a few other artists who studied under his direction would recognise this portrait of him. It would be wrong to believe that the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue*, published under his name, contradicts our assertions on this subject, because Cherubini never dreamed of writing a dogmatic treatise on these matters. He had made models for his students of all kinds of single and double counterpoints, imitations, canons and fugues: one or two sheets of principles, quite similar to what we find in Mattei's work, preceded the examples; all of Cherubini's pupils have copied these sheets and know like me what is involved. The idea of speculating on these models occurs to I don't know who; but a text was needed; Cherubini did not want to write about it. It was, I believe, Halévy who was kind enough to take on this task for his master. This is the truth about the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* published under the name of the great artist.²⁵



François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871), c.1842

²⁵ François-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères, fils et Cie, 1867), 263–264. ‘Maître parfait, lorsqu’il s’agissait de montrer par un exemple l’application du précepte, il ne pouvait presque jamais trouver l’explication de celui-ci. Malheur à l’élève qui ne comprenait pas à demi-mot ; car le mot tout entier lui venait rarement. Cette difficulté d’élocution, concernant des choses dont la pratique lui était familière, était pénible pour lui : elle lui donnait de l’humeur contre l’élève qui lui causait cet embarras. Auber, Halévy et quelques autres artistes qui ont fait leurs études sous sa direction le reconnaîtraient à ce portrait. On serait dans l’erreur si l’on croyait que le *Cours de contrepoint et fugue*, publié sous son nom, contredit nos assertions à ce sujet ; car Cherubini ne songea jamais à écrire un traité dogmatique sur ces matières. Il avait fait pour ses élèves des modèles de toutes les espèces de contrepoints simples et doubles, d’imitation, de canons et de fugues : une ou deux feuilles de principes, assez semblables à ce qu’on trouve dans l’ouvrage de Mattei, précédaient les exemples ; tous les élèves de Cherubini ont copié ces feuilles et savent comme moi ce qui en est. L’idée d’une spéculation sur ces modèles vient à je ne sais qui ; mais il fallait un texte ; Cherubini n’en voulait point écrire. Ce fut, je crois, Halévy qui eut la complaisance de se charger de cette tâche pour son maître. Telle est la vérité sur le *Cours de contrepoint et fugue* publié sous le nom du grand artiste’.

If one knows Cherubini, his various theoretical treatises as well as his works, this thesis supported by Fétis may seem surprising. A large number of testimonies clearly indicate that Cherubini wrote with clarity, precision and correctness and had no difficulty in expressing and explaining himself both orally and in writing. Moreover, according to Pougin,²⁶ Cherubini's artistic probity, pride and seriousness, recognised by all his contemporaries, were too important for this musician to allow himself that kind of deception. In addition, according to Pougin again, the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* was published at Cherubini's expense, which seems to indicate that he knew what he was doing. Finally, Pougin quotes a letter from Cherubini to the Académie des beaux-arts which seems to indicate that Cherubini was indeed the author of the *Cours*:

It is a mistake to believe that there are two kinds of counterpoint, namely, that of Germany and that of Italy. On the contrary, there is no difference, because the counterpoint is unique and similar in all these countries. See the treatises published by Fux, Albrechtsberger, Beethoven in Germany, Father Martini, Father Mattei and others in Italy, as well as Fétis and myself in France.²⁷ All these treatises contain exactly the same principles and the same precepts. Counterpoint is, so to speak, the true grammar of musical science, through which one acquires the faculty of writing a composition purely and vigorously. So, when you have a thorough understanding of counterpoint and fugue, you are sure to be a learned composer; we know enough then to indulge the impulses of genius, of the imagination, to approach what is called high composition, either vocal or instrumental. It is then that the Italian, German or French genres can be embraced according to the choice, taste and predilections of a young composer. But first of all, he must have learned counterpoint, as it was mentioned above.²⁸

This letter provides a more precise idea of the authorship of the treatise. However, various sources undermine that certainty. The first of these is the *Notice des manuscrits autographes de la musique composée par Cherubini*, published in 1845 by Botté de Toulmon. This is the catalogue of the composer's works, compiled by Cherubini himself a few years before his death. This catalogue, published to facilitate the sale of those manuscripts, records everything that Cherubini composed, year by year. The book ends with a summary of his oeuvre by genre. However, Cherubini makes no mention in this catalogue of the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue*, although he indicates other pedagogical works of lesser importance.

In addition, two manuscripts kept at the Bibliothèque nationale de France further blur the supposed identity of the author of the *Cours*. The first is a manuscript by Aimé Leborne.²⁹ It contains the 'cleaned up' Course that Leborne took from 1813 to 1820, when Cherubini was his teacher, as well as some works by Leborne himself. The volumes were donated to the Conservatoire impérial de musique by Leborne's widow on 10 July 1866. The text of this

²⁶ Arthur Pougin, 'Luigi Cherubini, sa vie, ses œuvres, son rôle artistique', *Le Ménestrel*, 1882/42, 330.

²⁷ Emphasis added.

²⁸ Arthur Pougin, 'Luigi Cherubini', 330. 'C'est une erreur de croire qu'il existe deux sortes de contrepoint, savoir : celui d'Allemagne et celui d'Italie. Il n'y a qu'au contraire aucune différence, car le contrepoint est unique et semblable dans tous ces pays. Voir les traités publiés par Fux, Albrechtsberger, Beethoven, en Allemagne, le père Martini, le père Mattei et autres en Italie, ainsi que Fétis et moi en France. Tous ces traités renferment exactement les mêmes principes et les mêmes préceptes. Le contrepoint est, pour ainsi dire, la véritable grammaire de la science musicale. C'est par lui qu'on acquiert la faculté d'écrire purement et vigoureusement la composition. Ainsi, lorsqu'on possède à fond le contrepoint et la fugue, est-on certain d'être un savant compositeur ; l'on en sait assez alors pour se livrer aux impulsions du génie, de l'imagination, pour aborder ce qu'on appelle la haute composition, soit vocale, soit instrumentale. C'est alors que les genres italiens, allemand, ou français peuvent être embrassés selon le choix, le goût et les affections d'un jeune compositeur. Mais il faut avant tout qu'il ait appris le contrepoint, tel qu'il a été mentionné ci-dessus'.

²⁹ F-Pn, shelf-mark MS-7664.

manuscript is – apart from a few details – the same as that of the 1835 edition of the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue*.

The second is an autograph manuscript by Edme-Marie-Ernest Deldevez entitled ‘Cours de contrepoint et fugue – L. Cherubini’.³⁰ This comprises 64 sheets of music containing excerpts from the examples given by Cherubini in his *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue*. Thanks to Deldevez’s memoirs, this manuscript can be dated between 1831 and 1837.³¹ Nevertheless, he clearly indicates that it is a copy of Cherubini’s *Cours*.³² In addition, the last page of the manuscript refers to the pages of the printed edition.

No other manuscript in French of the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* is currently listed in French or foreign libraries,³³ not even in the RISM, which mentions only those of Leborne and Deldevez.³⁴ This is probably the reason why the authorship of this treatise is still debated today. However, in 1962, François Lesure and Claudio Sartori indicated, in their attempt to catalogue the works of Cherubini, that a manuscript autograph of *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* by Cherubini was present in the Heyer collection at the beginning of the twentieth century. Wilhelm Heyer (1849–1913) was a German papermaker. He founded his collection in Cologne in 1902 with the aim of illustrating the development of instrumental music by attempting to bring together all its means of expression (instruments, manuscripts, letters and photographs). In 1913, he opened the Musikhistorisches Museum Wilhelm Heyer (Wilhelm Heyer Museum of Music History) and entrusted his librarian, Georg Kinsky (1881–1951), with scientific research into the various elements of his collection. Between 1912 and 1916, Kinsky published a description of its holdings in the form of three volumes grouping the works by theme: keyboard instruments (volume 1³⁵), string instruments (volume 2³⁶) and manuscripts (volume 3³⁷). We read there the following about Cherubini’s *Cours*:

N° 554. Original manuscript of the ‘Cours de contrepoint et de fugue’ (published by Maurice Schlesinger in Paris in 1835). The signature and the title page are not available [...]. This MS consists of 2 bundles: a. 72 fols. in (portrait) format c.34.5 x 22 cm with 139 written pages (text and musical examples); with the exception of a few short corrections and additions (on pp. 3, 11, 12, 44, 82–85, 109), the whole constitutes a single autograph transcription with numerous passages modified, crossed out and partly added on pasted sheets; b. 54 fols. of manuscript paper in various sizes and in various landscape formats (α : 8 fols. 23.5 x 32.5 cm; β : 12 fols. c.26 x 34 cm; γ : 34 fols. c.26.5 x 36 cm) with 96 written pages, more extensive musical examples as well as 2 eight-part fugues (‘Et vitam venturi’ by Cherubini, as well as ‘Cum sancto spiritu’ by Giuseppe Sarti, teacher of Cherubini) [...]. Comparison with various original Cherubini manuscripts held in the collection of the Kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin establishes the autograph character of our manuscript.³⁸

³⁰ F-Pn, shelf-mark MS-8323.

³¹ Edme-Marie-Ernest Deldevez, *Mes Mémoires* (Paris: Le Puy, 1890).

³² *Ibid.*, 265.

³³ However, one should note the manuscript entitled ‘Leçon de contrepoint’ by Auber, held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, shelf-mark MS-2774.

³⁴ See RISM ID n° 840012238 and RISM ID n° 840012259.

³⁵ Georg Kinsky, *Katalog. Musikhistorisches Museum von Wilhelm Heyer in Cöln*, i: *Besaitete Tasteninstrumente, Orgeln und orgelartige Instrumente, Friktionsinstrumente* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910).

³⁶ Georg Kinsky, *Katalog. Musikhistorisches Museum von Wilhelm Heyer in Cöln*, ii: *Zupf- und Streichinstrumente* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1912).

³⁷ Wilhelm Heyer, Rudolf Ibach, Alessandro Kraus, Paul Marie Guillaume Joseph de Wit and Georg Kinsky, *Musikhistorisches Museum von Wilhelm Heyer in Cöln: Katalog*, iii (Leipzig: Kommissions-Verlag von Breitkopf & Härtel, 1916).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 292. ‘N° 554. Original-Manuskript des Lehrbuchs “Cours de contrepoint et de fugue” (1835 bei Maurice Schlesinger in Paris erschienen). Signierung und Titelblatt sind nicht vorhanden [...]. Das Ms. Besteht aus 2 Konvoluten: a. 72 Bll. Im (Hoch-) Format c.34,5: 22 cm mit 139 beschriebenen Seiten (Text und Notenbeispiele),

Unfortunately, all trace of this document was lost during the sale of Heyer's collection on 6 and 7 December 1926. The notice, which lists the *Cours* under number 92 in the sale catalogue (also written by Kinsky), repeats the same elements as in the catalogue of the Heyer collection published a few years earlier. No indication of the buyer is given. Research carried out for the preparation of this critical edition of Cherubini's *Cours* led to the discovery of a manuscript in French, attributed to Cherubini and entitled 'Cours de composition', in the Stiftelsen Musikkulturens Främjande in Stockholm (Nydahl collection).³⁹ In order to confirm the filiation between this document and the manuscript of the Heyer collection, additional investigations into the composition of the Nydahl collection were necessary.

This manuscript, which bears the symbol MMS 394, corresponds exactly to that described by Kinsky, and page 111 matches the facsimile published in 1916. As indicated by Kinsky, there are many textual additions and corrections, in particular on pages 3, 12, 34, 44, 60, 61, 77, 110, 115, 120 and 132 of the first bundle. The most important alterations are added on pieces of paper pasted into the text. One also notes the addition of musical examples on strips of manuscript paper pasted on afterwards and sometimes covering crossed-out passages: on pages 19, 23, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40, 43, 51, 57, 63, 73, 116 of the first bundle, as well as various entries in bundles β and γ . These additions show the shaky handwriting of Cherubini's last years and indicate that the *Cours* was written in several instalments, including a short time before the 1835 edition. All these modifications are present in the first edition of the *Cours*, but absent from Leborne's manuscript. On the other hand, Leborne – which bears the same title – corresponds in all respects to the text of the manuscript MMS 394 before it was amended. It is therefore very likely that it was this manuscript that was copied by Leborne, before finally being modified for the 1835 edition. It has been authenticated as being in Cherubini's hand by Sandrine Lefranc-Loisel.⁴⁰ While noting that the double letters pp and ff are almost identical, which may testify to Cherubini's admiration and perhaps imitation of Halévy, she also identifies differences in the proportions and morphology of certain letters. For example, Cherubini's d's throughout the manuscript – including additions and corrections – are drawn in a very particular way: their links and morphology (with 'attacks' crushed like quavers) distinguish them very clearly from those of Halévy. Lefranc-Loisel also highlights differences in the page layout, links between letters and punctuation.

mit Ausnahme einiger kurzer Korrekturen und Zusätze (auf S. 3, 11, 12, 44, 82–85, 109) durchweg in eigenhändiger erster Niederschrift mit zahlreichen geänderten, durchstrichenen und z. T. auf angeklebten Blättern hinzugefügten Stellen; b. 54 Bll. Notenpapier in verschiedenen Querformat (α : 8 Bll. 23,5 x 32,5 cm; β : 12 Bll. c.26 x 34 cm; γ : 34 Bll. c.26,5 x 36 cm) mit 96 beschriebenen Seiten, größere Notenbeispiele nebst 2 achtstimmigen Fugen ("Et vitam venturi" von Cherubini, "Cum sancto spiritu" von Ch.s Lehrer Giuseppe Sarti enthaltend.) [...]. Durch genaue Vergleichung mit verschiedenen Originalhandschriften Cherubinis im Betze der Kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin war der autographe Charakter unseres Manuskripts einwandfrei festzustellen.'

³⁹ I am grateful to Bella Brover-Lubosky for drawing my attention to the Stiftelsen Musikkulturens Främjande in Stockholm.

⁴⁰ Sandrine Lefranc-Loisel is an expert at the International Criminal Court. She is also expert in 'Writing and Documents' at the Court of Appeal of Caen and the Court of Cassation (national list), an expert at the Administrative Court of Appeal of Nantes, and vice-president of the International Academy for Handwriting and Documents.

Structure and dissemination of the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue*

Already in his introduction, Cherubini indicates several things that are important for an understanding of the text. First, he assumes that the reader has already been taught the theory of chords and, consequently, harmony. Secondly, he distinguishes rigorous counterpoint following the modes of plainchant from that following modern tonality. This distinction is important, but not really followed. The keys of the examples follow the traditional pattern: most examples are in C major, while the others never exceed two sharps or flats. Finally, he emphasises the importance of the study of the fugue, in which lies, according to him, the foundation of composition.

The structure of the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* is very conventional and recalls Johannes Joseph Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, published in 1725.

First of all, he presents 'preliminary notions', where he defines certain elementary terms (consonances, dissonances, movements). Then he approaches counterpoint of two to eight voices by resorting to the five species defined by Fux:

- First species, note against note
- Second species, two notes against one
- Third species, four crotchets against one semibreve
- Fourth species, syncopation
- Fifth species, florid counterpoint

The text is generally limited to formulating rules, illustrated by examples, and in some cases to commenting on broader examples. The majority of the copies reproduced without the name of the author come from Cherubini himself; the other copies are taken from works written between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century. Composers here include Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c.1525–1594), Angelo Predieri (1655–1731), Johann Joseph Fux (c.1660–1741), Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg (1718–1795), Giovanni Battista Martini (1706–1784), Giuseppe Sarti (1729–1802), Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809) and Francesco Azzopardi (1748–1809). The examples of these composers testify both to Cherubini's theoretical culture and also to the teaching he received from Sarti, a few years before moving to Paris. The work ends with a series of melodies, or basses, which are used for exercises in strict counterpoint. These exercises indicate the pedagogical function of the *Cours*, which is not only written for students, but on the contrary is intended for a wider audience.

Cherubini's *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* was published in August 1835.⁴¹ It soon became one of the most important theoretical works of the nineteenth century. Only a few days after the first edition went on sale, we read in the *Revue et Gazette musicale*: 'The news of the week, the most important news for the musical world, is the publication of the *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* by the illustrious Cherubini. This book, the result of fifty years of work and study, is all

⁴¹ Luigi Cherubini, *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* (Paris: Schlesinger, 1835).

the rage among artists; more than 500 copies were bought the day it went on sale'.⁴² If the commercial success seems complete, the importance of the work is also expressed in the various translations published shortly after the French edition. The first is the Franco-German edition produced by F. Stoepel in 1835–1836 and published by F. Kistner in Leipzig.⁴³ Then came two English translations: the first made by J. A. Hamilton in 1837,⁴⁴ the second by Cowden Clarke in 1854.⁴⁵ Hamilton's edition was such a success that a second edition came in 1841. Clarke's translation, published in London and New York, allowed the *Cours* to cross the Atlantic. Cherubini's work also has an Italian translation by L. F. Rossi, published in Milan between 1855 and 1856.⁴⁶ Finally, a second German version produced by Gustav Jensen was published in 1896 in Cologne.⁴⁷ The number and speed of the translations testify to the success of Cherubini's *Course* and the esteem in which his contemporaries held him.⁴⁸ This theoretical work would be used by many Romantic composers, such as Schumann and Chopin.

Abbreviations

For a better understanding of the text and a more detailed analysis of the *Cours*, a number of abbreviations are used in this edition. We distinguish in particular between the different translations of the *Cours*, as well as the French editions. All these editions were compared in order to distinguish the errors, omissions or approximations of the editors or of Cherubini himself. They were also all confronted with the original manuscript held in the Stiftelsen Musikkulturens Främjande in Stockholm. In order to provide examples for his *Cours*, Cherubini cites a number of contemporary reference books, which we consequently list here. Finally, in order to provide a broader vision of the teaching of counterpoint in the middle of the nineteenth century, a number of contemporary works were used, such as those of Fétis and Reicha.

⁴² *Revue et Gazette musicale*, 23 August 1835, 283.

⁴³ Luigi Cherubini, *Theorie des Contrapunktes [sic] und der Fuge*, tr. Franz Stöpel (Leipzig: F. Kistner, 1836).

⁴⁴ Luigi Cherubini, *A Course of Counterpoint and Fugue*, tr. J. A. Hamilton (London: R. Cocks and Co., 1837).

⁴⁵ Luigi Cherubini, *A Treatise on Counterpoint & Fugue*, tr. Cowden Clarke (London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1854).

⁴⁶ Luigi Cherubini, *Corso di contrappunto e di fuga*, tr. L. F. Rossi (Milan: F. Lucca, n. d., c.1855–1856).

⁴⁷ Luigi Cherubini, *Theorie des Kontrapunktes und der Fuge*, tr. Gustav Jensen (Cologne: H. v. Endes, 1896).

⁴⁸ We are talking here only about the published translations, to which should be added those that have remained in manuscript, such as the Swedish translations held in the Musik och teaterbiblioteket in Stockholm under the shelf-marks ML 446 (Libris-ID: 2088464) and ML 446 – MT 59 (Libris-ID: 2088463). The latter was produced in 1837.

Albrechtsberger: Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, *Gründliche Anweisung zur Composition mit deutlichen und ausführlichen Exempeln, zum Selbstunterrichte, erläutert; und mit einem Anhang: Von der Beschaffenheit und Anwendung aller jetzt üblichen musikalischen Instrumente* (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1790).

Azzopardi: Francesco Azzopardi, *Le Musicien pratique* (Paris: Chez l'Éditeur, n. d.).

Cherubini1: Luigi Cherubini, *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* (Paris: Schlesinger, 1835).

Cherubini2: Luigi Cherubini, *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* (Paris: Schlesinger, 1836).

CherubiniBnF: Luigi Cherubini, *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue* (Paris: Schlesinger, 1835). Annotated exemplar, BnF shelf-mark Vm8 142.

CherubiniENG1: Luigi Cherubini, *A Course of Counterpoint and Fugue*, tr. J. A. Hamilton (London: R. Cocks and Co., 1841).

CherubiniENG2: Luigi Cherubini, *A Treatise of Counterpoint and Fugue*, tr. Cowden Clarke (London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1854).

CherubiniGER: Luigi Cherubini, *Theorie des Contrapunktes und der Fuge*, tr. Franz Stoepel (Leipzig: F. Kistner, c.1840).

CherubiniITA: Luigi Cherubini, *Corso di contrappunto e di fuga*, tr. L. F. Rossi (Milan: F. Lucca, c.1855–1856).

CherubiniMMS394, manuscript of *Cours de contrepoint et de fugue*, held in the Stiftelsen Musikkulturens Främjande in Stockholm, shelf-mark MM394.

DeldevezMS: Edme-Marie-Ernest Deldevez, 'Cours de contrepoint et fugue. L. Cherubini', manuscript held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, shelf-mark MS-8323.

ErrataRGMP: Luigi Cherubini, 'Fautes de gravure dans les pages de la première édition des cours de contrepoint', *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (1836).

Fétis1: François-Joseph Fétis, *Traité du contrepoint et de la fugue contenant l'exposé analytique des règles de la composition musicale depuis deux jusqu'à huit parties réelles* (Paris: Magasin de musique du conservatoire, 1825).

Fétis2: François-Joseph Fétis, *Traité du contrepoint et de la fugue contenant l'exposé analytique des règles de la composition musicale depuis deux jusqu'à huit parties réelles* (Paris : E. Troupenas et cie, 1846).

Fux: Johann Joseph Fux, *Gradus ad Parnassum* (Vienna: Van Ghelen, 1725).

Leborne1: Aimé Le Borne, *Cours de composition suivi par A. Le Borne dans la classe de M. Cherubini, Professeur Au Conservatoire Impérial de musique, Les préceptes de ce cours sont de Mr. Cherubini, Contrepoint depuis 2 jusqu'à 8 parties*, vol. 1 (n.p., c.1813–1815), vol. 1.

Leborne2: Aimé Le Borne, *Cours de composition suivi par A. Le Borne dans la classe de M. Cherubini, Professeur Au Conservatoire Impérial de musique, Les préceptes de ce cours sont de Mr. Cherubini, Contrepoint depuis 2 jusqu'à 8 parties*, vol. 2 (n.p., c.1815–1820), vol. 2.

Marpurg: Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, *Traité de la fugue et du contrepoint* (Paris: Imbault, An IX, 1801).

Reicha: Anton Reicha, *Traité de haute composition musicale* (Paris: Zetter, 1824).

RGMP: *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* (1836–1837).