

PREFACE

It often happens, for 18th– 19th Century ‘minor’ composers and players, that the main (sometimes only) source for biographical information is François-Joseph Fétis’ *Biographie Universelle des musiciens*, from which I quote:

DIZI (FRANÇOIS-JOSEPH), born in Namur on January, 14, 1780, was the son of a professor of music [...]. The young Dizi, since his childhood, showed the greatest disposition for music and his father’s severity developed his ability through laborious studies. The harp was the instrument he had most propensity to; unfortunately, in Namur there was no teacher who could teach him how to play. The lessons of his father (who was a violinist) were the only he ever received, and he was obliged to find ways of sharpening his talent by himself. He was barely sixteen years old when he conceived the idea of going to England. Thus he travelled and played through Holland; he embarked. Once arrived in a port where his boat had to make berth, he was promenading along the deck; suddenly he saw a seaman fall into the sea and, moved by his humaneness, he plunged to save him, forgetting that he was not able to swim. He soon fainted and, when he recovered his senses, he was in a house of the port, where he was taken care of. As soon as his clothes got dry, he wanted to go back to his vessel; but that ship (whose name he ignored) had resumed its course, since nobody noticed the incident of Dizi, who was saved by a port labourer. The young man’s situation was difficult to the utmost, because his harp and the trunks with his clothes, his linen, his letters of recommendation and his money, were on the departing vessel. His bag did not contain but a few scudos, barely enough to get him to London and he did not know one single word of English. He then decided to immolate what little he had to go to the English capital, hoping to find the craft containing all of his riches and his hope in the future. Once arrived in London, he was not able to find this ship, since he had no clue that could help him with his researches amongst the immense quantity of vessels berthing along the Thames; thus he found himself in this great city without any resources and not knowing anyone. After a few weeks, spent in the most pitiful condition, chance led him near a house where he could hear a harp playing; he decided to enter, he explained his situation and asked to be listened to while playing his instrument. This house was the house of Sébastien Erard, the celebrated harp and piano maker. The owner of the house appreciated the talent of the young Dizi, understood that he had some prospects and helped him find a convenient place in the world, finding him some students. Clementi was also helpful to him, since he held Dizi in high esteem. Soon Dizi became the most famous harpist in London and for thirty years he enjoyed a brilliant reputation as a virtuoso and as a composer for his instrument. Nature gave him a natural disposition for mechanics and a great ability. He wanted to apply his endowments to the improvement of his instrument and he invented [...] a double action harp which he called *Perpendicular Harp*, because the strings, attached to the centre of the neck, were in a perfect vertical position with respect to the centre of the sound board. The elevation of the strings of half or a whole tone was made by bascules attached in the centre of the neck. The difficulty of replacing the strings and the frequent inaccuracy of the mechanism, led Dizi to abandon this system in order to approach Erard’s one. [...] Dizi was also the first who conceived the idea of doubling the sound board of the harp, in order to give it more resistance to the vibrations of the strings. Finally he disposed the pedals of the instrument in a more regular order than the generally adopted one; but this innovation was not successful because it contrasted with the harpists’ habit.

In 1830 Dizi left London for Paris, where he associated with the Pleyel firm in order to establish a harp factory; but this venture did not have any success. At his arrival in France Dizi was appointed professor of harp of the royal family’s princesses. He died in Paris.

François Joseph Dizi (who died in Paris on November 1840) left his mark on the history of the harp in many fields: he was a gifted harpist, a composer, teacher, but he is little known as a harp maker and innovator. His ‘Perpendicular Harp’ had a peculiar split neck, somehow similar to the neck of the Zimmermann chromatic harp or of the Paraguayan harp. The strings were attached inside the neck. Inside the neck was also the *bascule* mechanism (with a series of tiny levers pressing the strings); eventually Dizi decided to adopt Erard’s *fourchette* mechanism. It is interesting to note that, according to Fétis, Dizi was the first to conceive the idea of doubling the sound board with a thin veneering.

In 1830 Dizi associated with Pleyel and this firm produced pedal harps until 1855. Dizi-Pleyel Harps are easily recognizable because of the shape of the sound board, which is covered with a thin veneering that, in the lower part, becomes rounded and covers the top of the base.

Dizi-Pleyel harps are extremely rare. When Camille Pleyel died, the firm was taken by his son-in-law, Auguste Wolff, who decided to stop building harps; in order to strengthen his decision, he ordered to burn in the factory courtyard all the harps, both finished and unfinished, of the brands Dizi-Pleyel and Naderman (which his predecessor had acquired). One of the few harps that escaped the stake belongs to the collection of the Museo dell'Arpa Victor Salvi (Piasco, Italy).

But the Pleyel firm, in spite of Mr. Wolff, still had a word to say about harps; the following manager of the firm was Auguste Lyon, who invented the cross strung chromatic harp.

Let's once more let François-Joseph Fétis speak:

KALKBRENNER (FRÉDÉRIC-GUILLAUME) [...] born in Cassel in 1784, received his first music and piano lessons from his father. His musical education went on in Naples, where he followed his family in 1796; later at the Paris Conservatory, which he entered in 1798, in Adam's piano class. The following year he became a student of Catel's harmony class. In the competition of year 8th (1800), he won second prize for the piano; the following year he was awarded first prize both for the piano and for harmony. He then started teaching and made his first essays of composition, which were published by Sieber. Meanwhile certain relationships, disapproved of by his father, caused him decide to send the son for a journey in Germany. Kalkbrenner left towards the end of 1803, and went to Wien, where he started to change his way of playing after having heard Clementi, whose admirable technique became his model. He has told, in his *Method for piano*, about the principles which informed his studies, and about the hard work which allowed him to obtain that evenness, that independence of the fingers, that brilliance of the left hand, that, since then, are considered as the main features of his performing art.

Once back in Paris, towards the end of 1806, after his father's death, Kalkbrenner was heard and admired for the power and the brilliance of his sound, which had not achieved yet that precious fineness that was such an important improvement. In the meantime he seldom performed in public, being always busy with a great number of students and with his composition work. He settled in England at the beginning of 1814, and soon became the first of the many virtuosos of that time and the most wanted teacher of his instrument. The ten years that he spent in England were also those which saw his most prolific period as a composer. [...] In 1818 he associated with Logier in order to establish a course with the *chiroplaste* method, invented by the latter: this course gained a great popularity, in spite of the hard opposition of many other music teachers, and the many pamphlets which were issued against the inventor of the *chiroplaste* and also against Kalkbrenner.

At the end of 1823 Kalkbrenner left England together with the famous harpist and friend Dizi, for a journey in Germany, which led them to Frankfurt, Leipzig, Dresden, Berlin, Prague, Wien and other big cities. Everywhere Kalkbrenner provoked astonishment because of his powerful performance and the perfection of his technique. Once back in Paris, in 1824, he associated with Camille Pleyel in order to exploit a piano factory which, thanks to the great amount of money he poured in it, thanks to his advice, his influence and his relations, became very successful very soon. As master of a piano school, he instructed many talented students, amongst whom one must point out madame Pleyel, the most beautiful talent ever born in France. Kalkbrenner's school must be regarded as the latest development of Clementi's. [...]

In 1833 Kalkbrenner undertook another journey to Germany, and visited Hamburg and Berlin; his success was just as bright as it had been in his previous journey, ten years before. Three years later he visited Belgium. The king, after hearing him in Brussels, awarded him with the order of Leopold. [...]

Kalkbrenner was member of many cavalry orders. He died in Paris on June, 11, 1849.

The present edition is based on the Wien print edited by Artaria presumably in 1824. The title page reads as follows: «Grand Duo / pour / Harpe et Piano / ou / deux Pianofortes / dédié / à Mesdemoiselles / FRANKS / de Dublin / par / Fréd. Kalkbrenner et Dizi. / Œuv. 82.»

The use of accidentals has been modernized, as the use of point and ties.