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Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Ernst Pfundt: A Pivotal Relationship between Two Composers and a Timpanist*

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DOCUMENTED EXAMPLES OF ORCHESTRAL MUSICIANS having influenced composers in their compositional process are rare indeed; and cases of timpanists assuming this role are virtually nonexistent.¹ No less a figure than Hector Berlioz was a fan of the famous Parisian timpanist Charles Poussard (b. 1798), of the Opera and Conservatoire

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1. There are, to be sure, at least two documented (as opposed to anecdotal) instances of minor influence by a timpanist. During the first rehearsal of Elgar's *Enigma Variations* by the London Symphony under Hans Richter in 1899, the timpanist, Charles Henderson, had just executed a passage in Variation 13 calling for a solo roll with side-drum sticks. The composer said that he did not like it. Henderson then tried using two coins held tightly between the forefinger and thumb of each hand while still cradling his sticks, with which he had to resume playing without a break. Elgar exclaimed, "Good! How is it done?" From then on, although instructions in the score have not been changed, this passage is usually played in this manner. See Thomas F. Dunhill, *Sir Edward Elgar* (London: Blackie, 1938), 89, and James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and Their History*, rev. ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 331–32.

In 1924, Richard Strauss was rehearsing his *Sinfonia Domestica* for a concert by the Vienna Philharmonic in celebration of his sixtieth birthday. Towards the end of this work the timpani part includes the three-note *Leitmotiv*, then falls silent while the rest of the orchestra continues with an ascending scale passage. Not to be outdone by his fellow musicians, the timpanist, Hans Schnellar, interpolated this rising scale on his Viennese lever timpani. Strauss, quite amazed at this display of dexterity and virtuosity, put down his baton, congratulated the drummer, and announced that from then on that was the way the passage should be played. And indeed it is, by virtually all timpanists today, despite its absence from the printed score or drum part. See Edmund A. Bowles, "Hans Schnellar and his Viennese Lever Timpani," *Proceedings of the Conference on Austria, 1996–1996: Music in a Changing Society* (Ottawa, 3–7 January 1996), ed. Walter Kreyszig, in preparation.

During his twenty years playing percussion in the Aldeburgh Festival, the legendary James ("Jimmy") Blades came to know Benjamin Britten, participating, for example, in the premiere as well as subsequent performances of *The Turn of the Screw*. The composer sent Blades the percussion score a few pages at a time as he was writing it, and on occasion discussed details such as the appropriate instruments for the sounds he

orchestras, but we have no definite evidence that Poussard played an influential role in the ground-breaking writing for the instrument by composers such as Berlioz and his contemporary, Giacomo Meyerbeer.² Similarly, it is not known whether the ubiquitous English timpanist Thomas Chipp (1793–1870), who played at Covent Garden, the Royal Opera, the Philharmonic Society, and in numerous other major English ensembles, had any specific effect on composers of his generation.³

However, we are on firmer ground in pinpointing who was responsible for the introduction of three kettledrums rather than the conventional pair into some of the major orchestras of Europe on a permanent basis. In France, Berlioz credited Poussard with having done so.⁴ In England, Chipp, too, used three hand-tuning drums for his innumerable performances, and by example promoted their use when only

was seeking. See James Blades, *Drum Roll: A Professional Adventure from the Circus to the Concert Hall* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 212; further details on the Britten-Blades relationship concerning *The Burning Fiery Furnace* are given on 244–47. On another occasion Blades introduced the composer Roberto Gerhard to his tiny, four-note piccolo xylophone (sounding above the normal high C), the notes of which Gerhard proceeded to incorporate into his next score (*ibid.*, 242).

2. Curiously, Fétis makes no mention of Poussard in his *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, 1st ed. (Paris: H. Fournier, 1835–44) or 2nd ed. (Paris: Firmin Didot Frères, 1860–65), and Poussard is similarly absent from J. F. Michaud, *Biographie universelle ancienne et moderne* (Paris: C. Desplaces and M. Michaud, 1854).

3. See James D. Brown, *Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* (London: A. Gardner, 1886), 159; Frederick J. Crowest, *The Dictionary of English Musicians* (London: Jarrold and Sons, 1895), 25; the *Dictionary of National Biography from the Earliest Times to 1900*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917), 4:259; and Nancy Benvenga, “Thomas Paul Chipp: Berlioz’s English Timpanist,” *Berlioz Society Bulletin* 73 (1971): 7–10. Other details can be found in Benvenga, *Timpani and the Timpanist’s Art: Musical and Technical Developments in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Gothenburg: Gothenburg University Press, 1979), 23 and note 20. Extant pictures of the 1859 Sacred Harmonic Society’s Handel Festival show Chipp performing in the orchestra with three kettledrums, which had been ordered for the occasion.

4. Hector Berlioz, *Evenings with the Orchestra*, trans. and ed. Jacques Barzun (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 254. Since at least two operas requiring three timpani had been performed at the Opera prior to Poussard’s appointment in 1830 (Chélaré’s *Macbeth* in 1827 and Auber’s *La Muette de Portici* in 1828), Benvenga discounts Berlioz’s attribution. However, because there had been occasional performances of works requiring three drums long before this, clearly “borrowing” an extra instrument from time to time must have been an established convention. At first, the third drum was used mainly to avoid overly-rapid retunings, although a few works at this time began to require three notes. Examples of such works can be found in Benvenga, *Timpani and the Timpanist’s Art*, 60–61.

a pair was the norm.⁵ But it was in Germany that the influence of a timpanist on composers as well as on the introduction of three rapid-tuning “machine” drums into the orchestra can be most clearly documented in the career of Ernst Gotthold Benjamin Pfundt (1806–1871), arguably the most famous kettledrummer of his generation (fig. 1).

Pfundt, the son of a singer, was born in Dömmitsch bei Torgau on 17 June 1806. He came to music at an early age, learning a variety of instruments. As a child of six he was introduced to the drum (*Trommel*), and two years later started taking lessons on the timpani. At age ten he was practicing both horn and flute, and at twelve the trumpet and trombone. Pfundt attended the Gymnasium in Bautzen, and in 1827 entered the University of Leipzig, where for four years he majored in theology. However, after obtaining his degree his passion for music won out over religion, and he apprenticed himself as a piano student to his uncle, Friedrich Wieck, the father of Clara (later Schumann). At the same time Pfundt doubled as choral director at the Leipzig City Theater and as its tenor soloist, subsequently becoming a piano teacher as well.⁶

But this was just the beginning of the remarkable career of this truly multi-talented man. During the 1836–37 concert season of the Gewandhaus Orchestra its conductor, Felix Mendelssohn, became dissatisfied with the timpanist, Friedrich August Grenser (who doubled on second violin, a common practice in those days). During a rehearsal Grenser had so badly bungled the drum and piano solo in the concluding moments of Beethoven’s “Emperor” Concerto that Mendelssohn was forced to write out a simplified part for him. In desperation, the maestro immediately hired Pfundt as a temporary replacement, who then performed so well that he earned Mendelssohn’s everlasting gratitude.⁷

5. That the use of three drums at this time was “uncommon” in England is substantiated by, among, others, George Hogarth, “Musical Instruments: Instruments of Percussion,” *The Musical World* 5 (1837): 82.

6. On Pfundt, see *Julius Schubert’s musikalisches Conversations-Lexikon*, ed. and rev. Robert Músiol (Leipzig: J. Schubert & Co., 1877), 341; Peter J. Tonger, *Konversationslexikon der Tonkunst* (Cologne: Wilhelm Hassel, 1881–85), 23:835 and 26:872; Alfred Dörfel, *Geschichte der Gewandhausconcerte zu Leipzig* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1884), esp. 1:90 and 240; and Hugo Riemann, *Musik-Lexikon*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Max Hesse’s Verlag, 1887), 747–48.

7. Dörfel, *Gewandhausconcerte*, 1:90. In his text Dörfel mentions this incident in the context of the 1836–37 concert season, when Beethoven’s “Emperor” Concerto was performed on 12 December 1836. In his notes (1:240, n. 119), however, he states that Pfundt came on board during the 1837–38 season. The former date is probably correct.

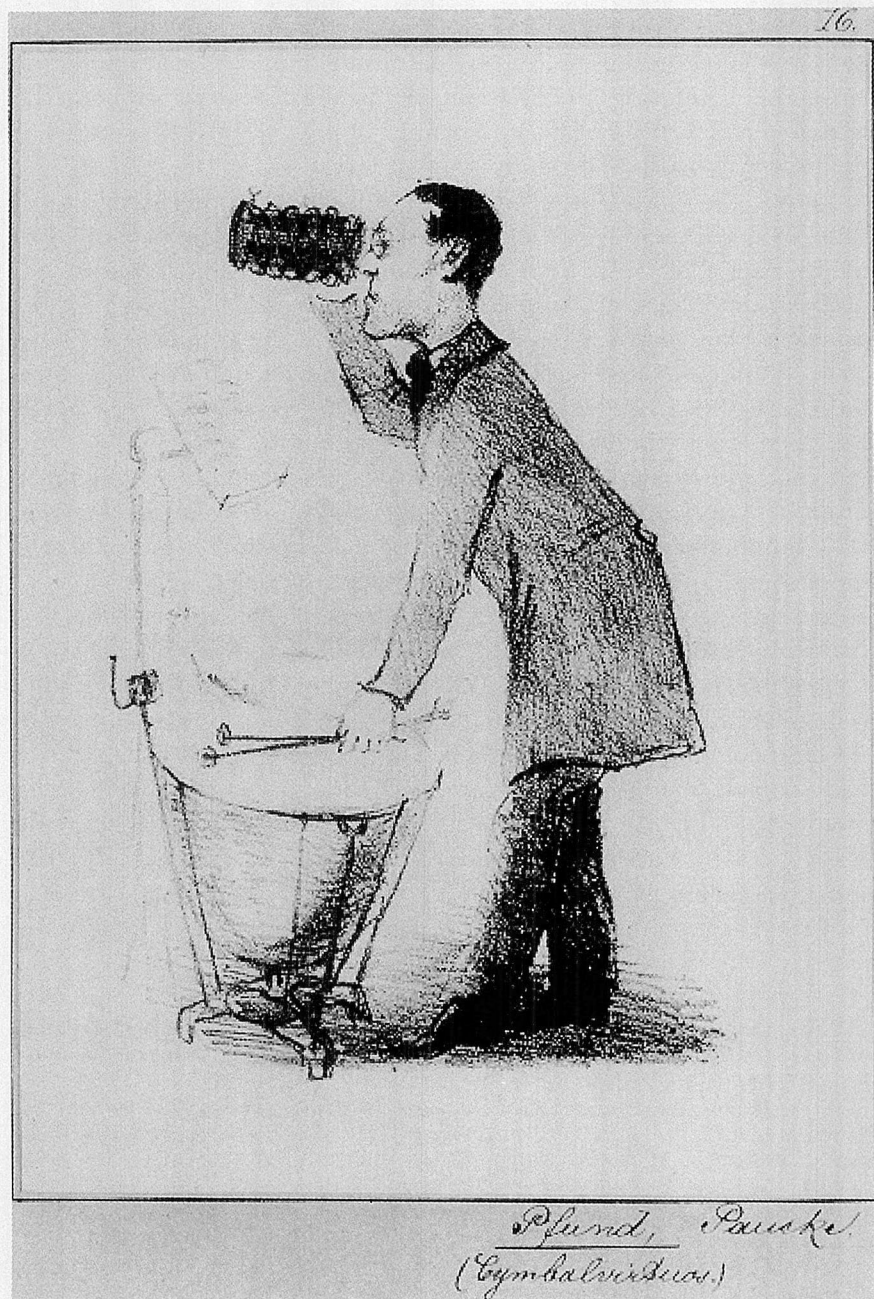


FIGURE 1. The timpanist Ernst Pfundt. Drawing by Carl Riemers (Leipzig, Museum für Geschichte der Stadt, inv. no. Müller XIX/38a).

Since Mendelssohn had virtual *carte blanche* from the orchestra's administration, he was able to employ Pfundt on a temporary basis until October 1841, when his appointment as solo timpanist was made permanent. Apart from sabbaticals and frequent loans to other orchestras, Pfundt remained in Leipzig until his retirement, shortly before his death on 7 December 1871. Last but not least, Pfundt also wrote one of the very first instruction manuals for the instrument, still an invaluable source for contemporary performance practices.⁸

Berlioz, a consummate master in writing for the instrument, referred to Pfundt as one of only three timpanists in the whole of Europe worthy of the name.⁹ No less a figure than Richard Wagner wrote in *Die Königliche Kapelle betreffend* that "for every instrument there appears from time to time a most singular talent, and on the timpani that is in the fullest sense *Musicus* Pfundt in Leipzig. He handles his instrument beautifully—so important for an orchestra—[and] his highly unique achievements caught our eye repeatedly. . . ."¹⁰ And Robert Schumann declared in the pages of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* that in bestowing a wreath of honor upon the forty or fifty members of the [Gewandhaus] Orchestra, "I would wish to award one leaf in particular to the orchestra's timpanist, Herr Pfundt, who is always alert and ready, like thunder and lightning: he plays splendidly."¹¹

8. Ernst G. B. Pfundt, *Die Pauken: Eine Anleitung dieses Instrument zu erlernen* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1849).

9. The other two were Charles Poussard in Paris and Friedrich Hentschel of the Berlin Royal Opera. See *The Memoirs of Hector Berlioz*, ed. and trans. David Cairns (London: Gollancz, 1969), 403.

10. *Der junge Wagner: Dichtungen, Aufsätze, Entwürfe (1832–1849)*, ed. Julius Kapp (Berlin/Leipzig: Schuster and Loeffler, 1910), 386–87. Wagner even tried, unsuccessfully, to lure Pfundt to Dresden as solo timpanist.

11. Robert Schumann, "Rückblick auf das Leipziger Musikleben im Winter 1837–1838," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 8 (1835): 115: "Ein besonderes Blatt wünschte ich noch dem Paukenschläger des Orchesters (Hrn. Pfund) [*sic*] zugetheilt, der immer wie Blitz und Donner da und fertig ist; trefflich spielt er sie." (This and all subsequent translations from the German were made by my wife, Marianne von Recklinghausen, whom I thank.) See also *Aus siebenzig Jahren: Lebenserinnerungen von Wilhelm Mos. v. Wasilewski* (Stuttgart/Leipzig: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1897), 72: "Mendelssohn thought highly of [Pfundt], and Hector Berlioz in admiration of his percussive talent even wrote a literary appreciation. Indeed, his rhythmic precision was astonishing, and his roll had tremendous energy" ("Mendelssohn hielt grosse Stücke auf ihm, und Hector Berlioz setzte ihm in Bewunderung seiner Paukenkünste sogar ein litterarisches Denkmal. In der That war seine rhythmische Präzision erstaunlich, und sein Wirbel von gewaltiger Energie"). See also Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*, 4th ed., ed. F. Gustav Jansen (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1981), 2:103.

Ernst Pfundt lived and worked at a time when radical alterations were taking place in both the use and construction of the timpani.¹² Outside of unique festival performances and outdoor ceremonial music, in which the standard pair of drums was doubled, tripled, or even quadrupled—a practice going back to the baroque era—their number in the orchestra had normally been limited to two, which until Beethoven's time were normally tuned in perfect fourths or fifths. To nineteenth-century composers, however, particularly those writing operas or oratorios and the like with many sectional key changes, this tradition proved to be unduly restrictive, and, starting with Georg Vogler, Carl Maria von Weber, and Anton Reicha, they soon added other notes and even changes of pitch within movements of their works. And with the introduction of so-called machine drums or lever timpani (*Hebelpauken*), invented by Gerhard Cramer in Munich in 1812, composers could write more demanding parts for the instrument.¹³ A quarter-century later, composers of the following generation wrote a number of pivotal works for multiple timpani which Pfundt either performed or is likely to have heard during his extensive travels: Franz Lachner's symphonies no. 1 (written for the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra in 1827) and no. 6 (performed in Leipzig on 17 January 1839), both featuring three timpani; Giacomo Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le Diable* (premiered at the Paris Opera on 21 November 1830), with a four-note melody for the drums (act 4, no. 17); Ludwig Spohr's *Historische Symphonie* (performed in Leipzig on 7 January 1841); Hippolyte Chélaré's opera *Die Hermanns-*

12. See my article, "Nineteenth-Century Innovations in the Use and Construction of the Timpani," this JOURNAL 5–6 (1980): 74–143, esp. 78–79, which contains an extensive discussion of composing for three or more drums as well as the acquisition of additional instruments by the major orchestras of Europe. As I note there, these isolated examples were for the most part *pièces d'occasion* for which extra drums were borrowed as required. In addition, my forthcoming volume, *The Timpani: A History in Pictures and Documents* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress) provides extensive enumeration of important milestones, or "firsts" (multiple timpani, unusual tunings, etc.).

13. While it has often been claimed that Weber was the first composer to introduce three drums into the conventional orchestral repertoire, in the revised version of the overture to his opera *Peter Schmoll* (1807), credit for this innovation must instead be given to his teacher and mentor, Georg Vogler (1749–1814). One of the first "tone painters" or colorists, he had pioneered in writing for three timpani, even providing them with a three-note theme in the overture to his opera *Samori* (1803). See Karl E. von Shaffhäutl, *Abt Georg Vogler* (Augsburg: M. Huttler, 1888), 213; and James Simon, *Abt Voglers Kompositorisches Wirken* (Berlin: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei von G. Schade, 1904), 61.

schlacht (premiered in Munich in 1835), including numbers for three and four drums; and the greatest showpiece of them all, Berlioz's *Requiem* (published in 1838), the *Dies Irae* of which requires no fewer than ten players and sixteen kettledrums—two pairs of drums with a player for each instrument, and a single player for each of the remaining six pairs.

Given that very few orchestras possessed the required number of instruments, what was the timpanist to do when faced with works such as these? He could of course borrow one or two drums of varying sizes as the occasion required, leaving his own pair tuned to the usual tonic and subdominant or dominant and tuning the other(s) either to the required additional note(s) in his part or in anticipation of a rapid pitch change. He could omit the “new” notes entirely if an additional kettle was unavailable or if time did not permit retuning. Or he could leave his drums tuned to the initial requirements in the score and play all subsequent “different” pitches out of tune. (Many French and Italian operatic composers such as Adam, Donizetti, and Rossini continued to write for the timpani using whatever notes the instruments had been tuned to initially, regardless of the key in which the rest of the orchestra was playing.) Finally, he could avail himself of a new invention: mechanically-tuned “lever” timpani capable of rapidly changing the drum's pitch, thereby obviating in many instances the need for a third drum. The use of these options varied from country to country and even from timpanist to timpanist.¹⁴ Pfundt advised retuning if the player had machine drums at his disposal or else omitting the out-of-tune notes entirely.¹⁵

During this period numerous inventors, working hand-in-hand with mechanics and metalworkers, developed ways of retuning the timpani

14. The use of a pair of machine drums was furthered by the fact that most opera house orchestra pits were too narrow to accommodate a set of three or four timpani. See also Gottfried Weber, “Vorschlag zu eine Vereinfachung und Bereicherung der Pauken,” *Allegemeine musikalische Zeitung* 16 (1814): col. 538; Anon., “Drey Pauken,” *ibid.*, 38 (1826): 350; François Castil-Blaze, *Dictionnaire de musique moderne* (Brussels: Académie de Musique, 1828), 252; and Georges Kastner, *Méthode complète et raisonné de timbales* (Paris: M. Schlessinger, 1845), 66–71.

15. Pfundt, *Die Pauken*, 15–16. Occasionally, a composer would call for one or two small drums, often at the very top of, or above, the instrument's normal compass: Mendelssohn's *Capriccio Brillant* (*d* and *e*) and *St. Paul* (*f#* and *g*) and Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* (also *f#* and *g*) are cases in point. Pfundt, who played in the premieres of the latter two works, advised that it was better to substitute the lower octave, not only because of the inferior tone quality of such high notes, but also due to the danger of the heads splitting; “I speak from experience,” he wrote.

by means of various linkages and gears. In the course of his travels visiting other major orchestras, including those in Cologne, Frankfurt am Main, Munich, and Paris, Pfundt saw and tried out at least two of the earliest mass-produced machine drums.¹⁶ The most successful of these had been invented by Johann Einbigler (1797–1869) of Frankfurt in 1835 (fig. 2).¹⁷ The first set of three was acquired for the opera orchestra in Frankfurt by its timpanist, Carl Gollmick. Sounding like an advertising copywriter, Gollmick writes that these drums

give the timpanist a thousand advantages never dreamed of before, because this [new] construction stands in comparison to the old type like a locomotive to a horse and carriage. . . . By this means [i.e., the crank] the greatest speed is assured, because now one can fine-tune or retune two timpani in less time than it takes to reach for the [tuning] key on the music stand. Secondly, every kind of disturbing clatter [from placing the key on the threaded tuning bolts] is omitted; and [third], one can even tune while playing, either by grasping both mallets in one hand or, if absolutely necessary, by turning the crank with a slight pressure from the elbow. . . . I recently tuned the low drum to *F*, executed a crescendo roll, and had someone else turn the [tuning] lever until [the drum reached] the octave, and then down again, producing a never-before-existing effect. Because one can perform the entire scale in moderate tempo, three timpani are not [always] absolutely necessary. . . .¹⁸

16. In addition to Einbigler's model, Pfundt saw and tried out the machine drums invented by the Munich gunsmith August Knocke. Tuning was accomplished by means of a foot-activated series of gear wheels; Pfundt found their "very complicated" machinery awkward and difficult to manage (*Die Pauken*, 9, 23–25, and 35).

17. Pfundt, "Maschinen-Pauken für grosse Orchester," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 19 (1843): 143, and his *Die Pauken*, 36. For near-contemporary references to Einbigler's drums, see Eduard Bernsdorf, *Neues Universal-lexikon der Tonkunst* (Dresden: Offenbach, 1861), 3:144; and Gustav Schilling, *Encyclopädie der gesammten musikalischen Wissenschaften oder Universal-Lexikon der Tonkunst* 5 (Stuttgart: F. H. Köhler, 1877), 397. According to Claudius Böhm, archivist of the Gewandhaus Orchestra, Einbigler's original drums are no longer in existence, having disappeared, probably during the Allied bombing of Leipzig in 1943–44 (letter to the author, 20 January 1995).

18. Carl Gollmick, "Die neuen Pauken des Herrn Einbigler in Frankfurt-am-Main," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 47 (1845): cols. 160–61: ". . . dem Pauker tausend früher nie geabnete Vortheile gewähren, denn diese Construction verhält sich zu den früheren, wie eine Locomotive zu einer Postcalesche. . . . Durch dies Verfahren ist natürlich die grösste Schnelligkeit bewirkt, denn man hat jetzt schon zwei Pauken ganz rein gestimmt oder umgestimmt, ehe man sonst nur nach dem Schlüssel auf dem Pult reichen könnte. Zweitens fällt jedes störende Geklapper weg und kann man selbst während des Schlagens stimmen, in dem man entweder beide Schlägel in eine Hand nehmen, oder im Nothfalle sogar durch einen leichten Druck mit dem Ellenbogen den Schlüssel rücken kann. . . . Hatte ich kürzlich damit gemacht, indem ich die tiefe Pauke in *F* stellte, einen Crescendowirbel schlug, und durch einen Anderen den



FIGURE 2. Einbigler-type timpanum with original hardware; kettles replaced. (Leipzig, Musikinstrumenten-Museum, inv. no. 3165).

Einbigler's pioneering mechanism depended upon a threaded, vertical tuning crank which pressed against a pivoted lever, or rocker arm, underneath the drum, which in turn activated a circular base-plate immediately above, to which were attached eight metal struts affixed

Schlüssel [*sic*] hinauf drehen liess, bis in die Octave und dann wieder herunter, welches eine noch nie dagewesene Wirkung hervorbrachte. Da man in mässigen Tempo die ganze Scala schlagen kann so sind drei Pauken nicht unumgänglich notwendig. . . ." Einbigler's timpani are also described in the *Autobiographie von Carl Gollmick* (Frankfurt am Main: C. Adelman, 1866), 1:104.

to a counter-hoop fitted over the calfskin head at the top of the kettle. By turning the crank clockwise or counter-clockwise the tension of the skin was tightened or loosened, thus quickly changing the drum's pitch.¹⁹ The tone of these instruments was much superior to that found in ordinary hand-tuning models because the very thin copper kettles were suspended from the metal hardware and thus were able to vibrate freely.

So impressed was Pfundt with this innovative mechanically-tuned kettledrum that he subsequently obtained a set of three for his own orchestra in Leipzig—at a time, it should be noted, when few orchestras were fortunate enough to possess three drums, much less models that could be tuned rapidly. Later on, Pfundt himself made minor improvements to the design, working together with a machinist and coppersmith named Glanert. Along with a modified model developed by Hentschel and Hoffmann a decade or so later, this version became a standard, especially in Germany, until the introduction of pedal timpani in the early 1880s.²⁰

In 1836, while visiting his old friend Ferdinand Hiller in Frankfurt, Mendelssohn made it a point to examine and in fact play on the Einbigler timpani recently acquired by the opera orchestra there. It is more than likely—although impossible to prove—that Pfundt had told the composer about these remarkable new instruments. At all events, so impressed was Mendelssohn that along with Hiller, Carl Guhr, and Ferdinand Ries, he signed his name to a short article for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in praise of the instrument.

All friends of music will be pleased to learn that Mr. Einbigler has been able to improve the timpani in a way in which the great difficulties of their use, due to the awkward manner of tuning up to now, have disappeared

19. See Bowles, "Nineteenth-Century Innovations," 115–16; Benvenga, *Timpani and the Timpanist's Art*, 8–10; and Herbert Tobischek, *Die Pauke: Ihre spiel- und bautechnische Entwicklung in der Neuzeit* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1977), 162–66.

20. Since Pfundt mentions his "improvements," without being specific, in his little book, they must have been made prior to its publication in 1849. In Leipzig, Glanert manufactured Einbigler drums for many years, incorporating Pfundt's improvements, of which the two most important were strengthening and thickening both the kettle's supports (which were also moved up to the rim) and circular base-plate. Additional minor improvements were made in the early 1860s by the Berlin timpanist Friedrich Hentschel, working together with the firm Carl Hoffmann in Leipzig. The Gewandhaus Orchestra once preserved a pair of these drums from Pfundt's own lifetime, but their present location is unknown. See Bowles, "Nineteenth-Century Innovations," 122–26, and Tobischek, *Die Pauke*, 190–91.

entirely. When one realizes that with such a drum one can, for example, play [i.e., a series of different notes] at [a tempo of Johann] Maelzel's metronome [setting of] 50, and that every note is completely pure [i.e., in tune], one can understand the extraordinary importance of this improvement.

To this is added a second, no less important advantage: Because the kettle in this new construction is not inhibited in being able to vibrate freely, therefore the tone is round, full, and strong at every [dynamic] level, loud or soft.

The undersigned, who have painstakingly examined this device, recommend it particularly to [opera] theater administrators and those in charge of musical establishments. These timpani are at the same time extremely durable and do not take up any more room than existing [models], and are extremely well priced.

Through his efforts Mr. Einbigler has earned the basic right to the gratitude of the musical world, and deserves the most honored recognition.²¹

In view of Mendelssohn's enthusiasm for this, the first truly successful machine drums, as well as Pfundt's own professional evaluation of them, it certainly seems logical that they both were involved in the decision to purchase a set of three for the Gewandhaus Orchestra, which became, after Frankfurt, one of the first ensembles to acquire them.²²

21. Carl Guhr, Ferdinand Hiller, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and Ferdinand Ries, "Sehr zweckmässige Verbesserung der Pauken," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 38 (1836): col. 495: "Allen Freunden der Musik wird es angenehm sein, zu erfahren, dass es Hrn. Einbigler dahier gelungen ist, die Pauke so zu vervollkommen, dass die grossen Schwierigkeiten in ihrer Anwendung, hervorgehend aus der bisherigen unbehülflichen Art ihrer Umstimmung, ganz verschwinden. Wenn man hört, dass man mit einer solchen Pauke z.B. nach Mälzel Metronom 50 schlagen kann, und dass dabei jeder Ton vollkommen rein ist, so wird man die ausserordentliche Wichtigkeit dieser Vervollkommnung begreifen.

"Hierzu gestellt sich ein zweiter, nicht minder wichtiger Vorzug: da der Kessel nach dieser neuen Art durch nichts in seiner freien Vibration gehemmt wird, so ist der Ton rund, voll u. kräftig in jedem Grade der Stärke und Schwäche.

"Unterzeichnete, welche das Werk genau geprüft haben, empfehlen es besonders den Theater-Directionenen u. Vorstehern musikalischer Instituten, da zugleich diese Pauken von äusserst dauerhafter Beschaffenheit sind, nicht mehr Raum einnehmen als die bisherigen u. ihr Preis äusserst gering ist.

"Hrn. Einbigler hat sich durch sein Streben die gegründetsten Ansprüche auf den Dank der musikalischen Welt erworben und verdient die ehrenvollste Anerkennung."

22. Precisely when these drums were acquired has never been determined. Based on the article just quoted, it is reasonable to suppose that they were obtained in 1837 or 1838; certainly the transaction could not have taken place earlier than 1836 (the year Einbigler introduced his new machine timpani, and also, coincidentally, when Pfundt first started playing in Leipzig), and it probably had occurred at the latest by 1841, when Pfundt's appointment was made permanent.

This orchestra, established in 1781, became the leading ensemble in Germany under Mendelssohn's leadership. The composer first visited Leipzig in the Fall of 1834; after being engaged as the orchestra's fifth conductor the following season, he proceeded to hone the players into a group without peer.²³ The twenty-six-year-old Mendelssohn soon became known for his imaginative, varied, and all-encompassing programming, featuring works by composers both past and present whose music was seldom if ever heard—Bach, of course, Vogler's overture to *Samori* (performed on 8 March 1838), Lachner's Sixth Symphony, the second and third acts of Chélard's opera *Die Hermannsschlacht*—and introducing Schumann's Symphony No. 1 in addition to works of his own such as the Symphony-Cantata *Lobgesang*, the oratorio *St. Paul*, and *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*.²⁴

Most scholars would not think of Mendelssohn particularly as an orchestral innovator. Certainly, in his early writing for the timpani he looked back to the classical style, for example in pairing the drums with trumpets for the most part, using conventional tunings. To cite but one example, his "Reformation" Symphony (completed in 1830 but not published until 1868 as no. 5²⁵) exhibits conservative writing for the instrument, with numerous "dissonant" notes in passages where the orchestra has modulated from the key of D to the key of A. Here, the small drum tuned to *e* is called for harmonically, but Mendelssohn leaves the timpani tuned to *d* and *A*. However, a closer examination reveals that as time went on Mendelssohn adopted a more progressive approach, closer to the music of Weber, specifically in his occasional use of three drums. Additionally, in his later works composed during the 1840s he often called for passages requiring either very fast retuning or else a third drum pre-set to the "extra"

23. When Mendelssohn took over the orchestra it included approximately thirty-five full-time musicians. There were about twenty concerts per season, each with but one rehearsal. In addition, there were performances in the theater and in church. Thanks to his skill as a conductor, educator, and disciplinarian, Mendelssohn was able to raise the orchestra's standards to a great degree, as well as increasing the number of players (see for example Fritz Henning, *The Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra*, trans. Lena Jaek [Leipzig: Edition Leipzig, 1962], esp. 21–39). On Mendelssohn's skill as a conductor as well as his rehearsal technique, see Wasiliewski, *Aus siebzig Jahren*, 58–60.

24. The programs for these concert seasons are listed and discussed in Dörffel, *Gewandhausconcerte*, 83–116, with a complete listing by composer, soloist, and date in volume 2. See also Eberhard Creuzburg, *Die Gewandhaus-Konzerte zu Leipzig 1781–1931* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1931), 63–65.

25. See Judith Silber, "Mendelssohn and his Reformation Symphony," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40 (1987): 310–36, esp. 313, n. 9.

note.²⁶ It is especially noteworthy that, although the composer had been writing for full orchestra since the mid-1820s, it was not until a decade later that he felt the urge to emulate his more progressive contemporaries vis-à-vis the timpani—even though Mendelssohn owned a copy of Reicha's treatise on orchestration (Reicha had written a most unusual work for chorus and orchestra, *Die Harmonie der Sphären* [1815], featuring eight timpani) and was a close friend of Ignaz Moscheles, whose second piano concerto, composed in 1825 and performed in Leipzig on 1 February 1838, features an opening solo for three timpani. This sudden change in outlook and technique took place when, as conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra, he was introduced not only to the still-new convention of three drums in the ensemble but also to the availability of rapid mechanical tuning.²⁷

Mendelssohn's oratorio *St. Paul* had its German premiere in Düsseldorf on 16 March 1836. Following his visit to Hiller later that year, and after the Leipzig orchestra had acquired its new Einbigler timpani, he revised his score—as he often did with his compositions, at times even obsessively—adding a third note to several movements: *e*, *C* and *G* (no. 20); *d*, *Bb* and *F* (no. 22); and *f#*, *d* and *A* (no. 44) (see ex. 1).²⁸ It was performed in the

26. Increasingly, as time went on, composers availed themselves of the flexibility of writing for either a pair of machine drums or three timpani; the parts could be played either way, depending upon the instruments available to a particular orchestra. There was a corresponding tendency not to indicate the tuning or number of drums in the published scores, leaving the choice of execution to the performer. Significantly, when Giacomo Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le Diable* (1831), with its four drums playing a melody in the finale to act 4 (no. 17), was published by Schlesinger in Berlin, the editor unilaterally and arbitrarily omitted one of the timpani in the printed scores, leaving the cellos and double basses to play the missing note.

27. Mendelssohn seems to have been particularly observant concerning the timpani. For example, commenting upon the Paris Conservatory Orchestra during a visit in 1832, he noted that the drums had a "hollow, dull sound, like a bass drum" (see *Reisebriefe aus den Jahren 1830 bis 1832*, ed. Paul Mendelssohn-Bartholdy [Leipzig: H. Mendelssohn, 1865], 342). He also knew how to play the instrument if necessary: At a rehearsal in Paris that same year, in which Mendelssohn was the soloist in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4, "When it was time to begin [the third movement] the timpanist was absent from his chair. To the amusement of everyone, Mendelssohn leapt into the orchestra, seized the drum sticks, and played like an old veteran" (see Ferdinand Hiller, *Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy: Briefe und Erinnerungen* [Cologne: Verlag der M. DuMont-Schubert'schen Buchhandlung, 1874], 18: "... als man anfangen wollte, fand sich ... die Stelle des Paukenkünstlers unbesetzt. Zur allgemeinsten Heiterkeit sprang Mendelssohn aufs Orchester, bemächtigte sich der Schlägel und wirbelte wie ein Tambour der alten Garde").

28. Theodor Müller-Reuter, *Lexikon der deutschen Konzert-Literatur: Ein Ratgeber für Dirigenten* (Leipzig: C. F. Kahnt Nachfolger, 1909), 93. On the oratorio in general, see Otto Jahn, *Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdys Oratorium Paulus, Ein Gelegenheitschrift* (Kiel:

No. 20

Recit. In E, C & G
Allegro molto

11 4 *tr* *pp* *cresc.*

f *f* *ff* A

No. 22

In D, B \flat & F
Grave
Chorus 4

4 *tr* *ff* *tr* *tr* 3 *tr* 4

p

No. 44

In F \sharp , D & A
Allegro maestoso
Chorus 3

3 *tr* 2 *tr* 5 A *tr* 2 *tr*

f

EXAMPLE 1. Mendelssohn, *St. Paul*, excerpts from timpani part to nos. 20, 22, and 44. After *Werke*, ed. Julius Rietz (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1874–77), Ser. 13, vol. 1 (no. 85).

Paulinerkirche on 13 March 1837 and in the *Gewandhaus* three days later. His secular cantata *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*, composed in 1832, received its first performance in Berlin in January 1833. The score was revised twice, with the final version being performed in Leipzig on 2 February 1843.²⁹

Schwers, 1842), passim. See also Thomas Ehrle, *Die Instrumentation in den Symphonien und Ouvertüren von Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1983), 62–64 and 245–49.

29. According to Douglass Seaton, “The Romantic Mendelssohn: The Composition of *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*,” *The Musical Quarterly* 68 (1982): 398–410, the work existed in manuscript form for ten years and was then taken up and revised in 1842–43 in Leipzig. Seaton does not address the question of revisions to the timpani part. Benvenga, however (*Timpani and the Timpanist’s Art*, 59), says that it is “quite likely” that the rapid tuning changes were added specifically for the Leipzig performance, now that the orchestra had its machine drums. For a musical analysis, see Friedrich Zander, *Über Mendelssohns Walpurgisnacht* (Königsberg: Wilhelm Koch, 1982), 12–42.

Compared to the original (written four years before Mendelssohn saw Einbigler's machine drums), the revised timpani part requires fast retunings, for example from *d* and *G* to *e* and *A* in around twenty-six seconds at an Allegro molto tempo in no. 6 (ex. 2). Interestingly, when Mendelssohn added incidental music to his earlier Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream in 1843, he included a rapid pitch change from *d* to *c* in the scherzo movement within six measures of Allegro vivace tempo (ex. 3). *Elijah* was first performed in Birmingham on 26 August 1846, and requires retuning in literally a matter of a few seconds: specifically, from *eb* to *e* within the short space of just one measure in no. 16, and from *A* to *Bb* in under eight seconds in no. 20 (ex. 4).³⁰ Significantly, these alterations of pitch are not spelled out in the score. In fact, the part was written so that it could be played either on three hand-screw timpani or on a pair of machine drums. A frequent visitor to England, Mendelssohn had surely observed that three hand-tuning instruments were the norm in that country (as in France) even after lever timpani had been introduced in Germany.³¹

In discussing the familial relationship between Robert Schumann and Ernst Pfundt one must constantly keep in mind that their close ties were formalized and solidified, as it were, while Schumann was courting Clara Wieck. Starting in 1831 the young composer was either a boarder or a frequent visitor to his future wife's home.³² Since Pfundt also visited his

30. The revisions to all three scores are discussed in this context in Benvenga, *Timpani and the Timpanist's Art*, 56–64. On the first performance of *Elijah* see Frederick G. Edwards, *The History of Mendelssohn's Oratorio Elijah* (London: Novello, Ewer & Co., 1896), 76–96, where the numerous orchestral and choral revisions are discussed in detail. A picture of the Birmingham performance is featured in the *Illustrated London News* 9 (29 August 1846): 137.

31. See for example Wilhelm Ganz, *Memories of a Musician* (London: J. Murray, 1881), 145; also Abraham Rees, *Cyclopaedia, or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Bacon, 1819), 12: "In some instances three kettle-drums have been used . . . but this is very rare." The identical passage is also found in the *Encyclopedia Londonensis*, ed. John Wilkes et al. (London: J. Adlard, 1810–49), 11:694.

32. See *The Marriage Diaries of Robert and Clara Schumann*, ed. Gerd Nauhaus, trans. Peter Ostwald (London: Robinson Books, 1994), esp. 7 and 61; and Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 68. In the unpublished diaries of Clara Wieck, Pfundt "turns up playing the flute with her at a little musicale in 1827," and later that same year "playing horn when she played a Mozart concerto at home just before her eighth birthday. . . . In Robert's diaries, he is referred to as 'Cousin Pfundt' years before Robert and Clara were married. He was definitely a close friend of Robert's and is always mentioned with affection" (letter to the author from Dr. Nancy B. Reich, 11 February 1998).

No. 6

In D & G
Allegro molto

5 33

In E & A

EXAMPLE 2. Mendelssohn, *Die erste Walpurgisnacht*, excerpt from timpani part to no. 6. After *Werke*, Ser. 15, vol. 5 (no. 118).

In D & G
Allegro vivace

G 5 6 2 H

In C

EXAMPLE 3. Mendelssohn, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, excerpt from timpani part to scherzo. After *Werke*, Ser. 15, vol. 4 (no. 117).

No. 16 Recit. und Chor

In E \flat & B \natural

Elias

Der du dei-ne Die ner machst zu Geis-tern, und dei-ne En-gel zu Feu-er flam-men, sen-de sie her-ab!

In E \flat & B pp $cresc.$ E \flat to E

In E & B
Allegro con fuoco $\text{♩} = 152$

ff $dim.$ ff sf sf sf A tr sf

No. 20 Chor

In E \flat & B \natural
Allegro moderato ma con fuoco

B tr B \flat to A \flat 14 C tr A \flat to A

13 tr A to B \flat 6 tr D

ff ff ff

EXAMPLE 4. Mendelssohn, *Elijah*, excerpts from timpani part to nos. 16 and 20. After *Werke*, Ser. 13, vol. 2 (no. 86).

uncle regularly—and as a pianist often participated in four-hand piano performances of new musical works—he and Schumann became fast friends, and their close relationship is attested by the many letters that the timpanist wrote to the composer.³³ As with Mendelssohn, many scholars today would not characterize Schumann as a pioneer orchestral innovator.³⁴ Only a year and a half younger, he was in a sense a friendly rival as well as respectful colleague, for Mendelssohn was certainly far more of a celebrity in the city they both shared. During their ten-year friendship one can see them both expanding and “modernizing” their writing for the timpani at precisely the time when the Gewandhaus Orchestra began using the three new lever drums played by Ernst Pfundt.³⁵ But in Schumann’s case it was not only the availability of instruments with a new technology that served as a stimulus, but what one might call “family osmosis” from his influential cousin-in-law. Fortuitously, all this took place during the decade or so when he produced his most concentrated output for orchestra.³⁶

Schumann’s Symphony No. 1 in B-flat (“Spring”) was one of the first popular works in this genre to require three drums. The first and fourth

33. The letters are to be found in Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellńska, Corr. Bd. 21, Nos. 3727, 3730, 3739, 3881, 3883, 4104, and 4346. Virtually indecipherable even to a native German-speaker, they deal mainly with music problems with Pfundt’s chorus, the examination of scores, comments about members of the Gewandhaus Orchestra and musical luminaries in Leipzig, contract negotiations, family news, and salary complaints. No letters of reply from Schumann to Pfundt have come to my attention; apparently this was a one-way correspondence. The four references to Pfundt in the *Catalogue of the Mendelssohn Papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford* 1, ed. Margaret Crum (Tutzing; Hans Schneider, 1980) are not letters but documents containing Pfundt’s signature, among others. I have not had an opportunity to examine photocopies of the nine letters Mendelssohn wrote to Gollmick (1:323).

34. On Schumann’s orchestration, see Otto Karsten, “Die Instrumentation R. Schumanns” (Ph.D. diss., Vienna, 1922), 47–48; Armin Gebhardt, *Robert Schumann als Symphoniker* (Regensburg: Bosse Verlag, 1968), 25–49 (Symphony No. 1) and 59–87 (Symphony No. 4); and Jon W. Finson, *Robert Schumann and the Study of Orchestral Composition: The Genesis of the First Symphony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), esp. chapter 3 (“The Scoring of the First Version of Op. 38”), 65–95; Schumann’s close interaction as a music critic with the Gewandhaus Orchestra is covered on pp. 16–19. See also John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a “New Poetic Age”* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 228–35 (“Orchestration of the ‘Spring’ Symphony”), 329–56 (*Genoveva*), and 356–65 (*Manfred*).

35. See Leon Plantinga, “Schumann’s Critical Reaction to Mendelssohn,” in *Mendelssohn and Schumann: Essays on Their Music and its Context*, ed. Jon W. Finson and R. Larry Todd (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 11–20.

36. In addition to Pfundt’s encouragement and the presence of three new machine drums in the Leipzig orchestra, Schumann was influenced by his admiration for the music of Franz Lachner (1803–90), organist, cellist, horn-player, and *Kapellmeister* of the Munich court chapel and royal opera, who wrote for three drums in several of his works. Schumann called Lachner’s Third Symphony a “remarkable work,” with “brilliant

movements call for the unconventional tunings of *B♭*, *G♭* and *F*, while the third (in *d*, *A* and *F*) contains rhythmical challenges unusual for this era (ex. 5). On 14 February 1841, one day after completing the orchestration of the first three movements,³⁷ Schumann played the symphony for two dinner guests, Pfundt and the critic Ernst Wenzel, at which time Pfundt made some suggestions concerning the use of three rather than two drums.³⁸ Schumann made his final revisions at the end of March, and after three rehearsals the first performance took place at a pension fund concert in Leipzig on the last day of that month. (The hapless Grenser was again the timpanist, some six months before Pfundt finally replaced him on a permanent basis.) The composer later wrote of Pfundt that he was “a veritable hero upon his instrument, who stands in relation to present [players] (such as Grenser) and to others as genius does to mere talent. His roll in [my] B-flat symphony [as well as] several places in Mendelssohn’s overtures, etc., are masterpieces difficult to equal, such as can scarcely be heard in Paris or New York.”³⁹ Concerning the first performance, it was later reported that “almost every instrument had a ticklish passage which was difficult to perform at that time. . . . Only Pfundt was completely satisfied, observing that the composer had, by way of exception, ‘written in’ for him [a part] for three timpani instead of two.”⁴⁰

orchestration” (see *Music and Musicians: Essays and Criticisms by Robert Schumann*, ed. and trans. Fanny R. Ritter [Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1980], 40 and 46). On Lachner, see Max Chopp, *Zeitgenössische Tondichter* (Leipzig: Druck und Verlag der Rosberg’schen Buchhandlung, 1890), 70–73; Otto Kronseder, “Franz Lachner” (Ph.D. diss., Leipzig, 1903), 10–31; and Bowles, “Nineteenth-Century Innovations,” 87–88.

37. A chronology of the scoring and revisions is given in Finson, *Robert Schumann*, 66–67.

38. Mendelssohn, examining the full score a couple of weeks later, made his own comments for changes to the orchestration: see Eugenie Schumann, *Robert Schumann: Ein Lebensbild meines Vaters* (Leipzig: Koehner & Amelang, 1931), 290.

39. Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 301: “. . . eines wahren Helden auf seinem Instrumente, der sich zum jetzigen (wie der Grenser) und zu anderen wie das Genie zu blossen Talent verhält. . . . Sein Wirbel in der B-dur Symphonie, einige Stellen in Mendelssohn’schen Ouverturen u.s.w. sind bis jetzt schwerlich übertroffene Meisterstücke, wie man sie kaum in Paris und Newyork hören kann.” How Schumann was able to compare Pfundt with an unnamed timpanist in New York remains a mystery. Perhaps this was meant merely as a figure of speech, although *Das Paradies und die Peri* was performed in New York in 1848.

40. Dörffel, *Gewandhausconcerte*, 96: “Fast jedes Instrument hatte eine heiklige Stelle, die für die Ausführung damals beschwerlich war. . . . Nur Pfundt war völlig zufrieden gestellt, dass ihm der Componist ausnahmsweise drei Pauken statt zwei ‘geschrieben’ hatte.”

In B \flat , G \flat & F
Allegro molto vivace
C

tr *ritard.* *tr* Tempo I
Cor. 7

fff

f *tr* *tr*

29 Bassi *tr* *tr*
dim. *p cresc.*

f sf sf f f f f

Scherzo
In D, F & A
Molto vivace

4 *tr* *tr* *tr*
Viol. *ff*

EXAMPLE 5. Schumann, Symphony No. 1, excerpts from timpani part to movements I and 3. After *Werke*, ed. Clara Schumann (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1881–93), Ser. 1.

The Symphony No. 4 in D Minor was first completed in September 1841, shortly after the First Symphony, before being revised and fully scored ten years later. In both versions of the first movement Schumann requires not one but three retunings, a radical departure from traditional symphonic writing: from *d* and *A* to *d \flat* and *A \flat* , then to *e* and *B* and back to *d* and *A*, in about 40 seconds in the first instance (ex. 6).⁴¹ Schumann's only opera, *Genoveva*, written between 1847 and 1849, contains several passages necessitating either a third drum or rapid changes in pitch, including from *c* and *G* to *d* and *A* and then from *A* to *c* in about a

41. It is hard to say why Schumann did not write for three timpani in any of his three other (and later) symphonies. Indeed, the output of many composers displays less “advanced” or “complicated” drum parts in later compositions. Perhaps it is a mistake on our part to expect a master’s more mature works to necessarily be superior in this regard. Could it be that Schumann and these other composers simply did not conceive of their later works in terms of three timpani or rapidly retuned notes, and were quite satisfied to ignore the current trend?

In D & A
Lebhaft

10 D 20 in D \flat & A \flat

In E & B
G

In D & A
L

1 2 3 4 5

15 M tr tr tr tr tr

EXAMPLE 6. Schumann, Symphony No. 4, three excerpts from timpani part to movement I. After *Werke*, Ser. 1.

minute (no. 1); from *c* and *G* to *B* and *F* \sharp (finale of act 1); and from *c* and *G* to *e* and *A* in around 38 seconds (no. 14) (ex. 7). In *Manfred*, which premiered in 1849, the composer asks the timpanist to change the pitch of his smaller drum from *d* to *c* and back again in the “Hymnus der Geister” (no. 7), each time within just four measures of rest, or approximately 12 seconds at the specified tempo (ex. 8).⁴² Parenthetically, in the Symphony No. 2 in C (1845–46), one is tempted to speculate whether the unusual (for this era) and highly effective timpani solo four measures from the end of the fourth movement (ex. 9) may perhaps have been written with Ernst Pfundt in mind. Be this as it may, one can certainly imagine that already famous musician proudly performing this passage for all to hear and see from his place at the rear of the Gewandhaus Orchestra.

42. All these works are discussed in this context in Benvenga, *Timpani and the Timpanist's Art*, 56–64.

Act I, No. 1
In C & G
Leidenschaftlich bewegt

3 5 6

p *cresc.*

In D & A *tr* 9 *tr* 14 In D & C *tr*

ff *sf* *ff* *p cresc.*

f *Tempo wie zu Anfang*

Act I, No. 7 (Finale)
In C & G
Sehr lebhaft

4 D

pp

27 E 2 In B & F# 2 *tr*

f

Act III, No. 14
Recit., Lied, Duet
In C & G
Die viertel etwas gemässiger

10 *tr* 4 *tr* 19

p *pp* *nach und nach schneller*

In E & A

ff *ff* *ff*

B

ff sf sf sf sf sf *p cresc.* *ff*

tr *dim.* *p* *p* *p*

EXAMPLE 7. Schumann, *Genoveva*, excerpts from timpani part to act 1, nos. 1 and 7, and act 3, no. 14. After *Werke*, Ser. 9, vol. 2.

No. 7

Hymnus der Geister Arimans

In D & A
Majestätisch

Solo
tr^m

p — *f*

15 *molto cresc.* *sf* *ff*

A *A* 4 In D & A *ff*

EXAMPLE 8. Schumann, *Manfred*, excerpt from timpani part to no. 7. After *Werke*, Ser. 9, vol. 4.

In C & G

Allegro molto vivace

Solo

sf

EXAMPLE 9. Schumann, *Symphony No. 2*, excerpt from timpani part to movement 4. After *Werke*, Ser. 1.

This close relationship between composer and timpanist is most unusual, all the more so thanks in part to the coincidental and contemporaneous improvements in mechanics and instrument-building. No less significant is the presence of innovative writing for the timpani in the music of two composers at precisely the time when both new and improved drums and an especially talented performer arrived upon the scene. I know of no other cases of a timpanist having such a major and lasting effect upon a composer. Without a doubt, there must surely be other examples of this kind of a relationship concerning other orchestral musicians who not only influenced how composers within their orbit wrote but who introduced them to the latest instruments and their technical potentials. As far as the kettledrums are concerned, there may well be other Ernst Pfundts waiting to be rediscovered.