The Piano Concertos of John Field (1782 – 1837)

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PREFACE

One of the problems for the modern listener or student, wishing to become better acquainted with the seven piano concertos of John Field, is the lack of readily available scores for all but the first three works. In 1961 *Musica Britannica* published full scores of these first three concertos, but the projected second volume incorporating the last four concertos has not appeared.

In preparing this study, the writer was fortunate to be able to refer to manuscript scores of the Fourth and Sixth Concertos, kindly loaned by the late Patrick Piggott, author of *The Life and Music of John Field – Creator of the Nocturne*, who had earlier assembled these from the full sets of orchestral parts in the British Museum.

The BBC Music Library has a full score of the Seventh Concerto, again compiled from the orchestral parts, as well as an early nineteenth-century copy of the score of the Fifth Concerto, which could just possibly be in Field's own hand. These two scores (in the latter case, a photocopy) were kindly loaned by Clifford Bartlett, then deputy music librarian at BBC Yalding House. The score of the Fifth Concerto is complete, except for the second piano part and the extra percussion parts which occur during *L'Orage*; a photocopy of each of these two parts, taken from the full set in the British Museum, was again kindly loaned by Patrick Piggott.

The writer is greatly indebted to Patrick Piggott, Clifford Bartlett, and to Plymouth Library Services for making available full scores of all seven concertos, and thereby enabling this study to be undertaken.

Philip R Buttall
Plymouth 2005

INTRODUCTION & BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

The latter part of the eighteenth century witnessed two interrelated developments, the effects of which made a deep impression on the music and musical life of the ensuing decades. Firstly, music was seeking to free itself from being the prerogative of the upper class, and was now aiming to capture and appeal to a much wider audience through the medium of the developing public concerts. Naturally the concerto could provide one of the best vehicles for claiming the attention and admiration of the musical public, if its form were modified to allow the soloist the necessary opportunities to dazzle, with technical excellence, against an orchestral background. The metamorphosis of the earlier solo concerto into this new concerto for the virtuoso was not a difficult or unpredictable journey. The second development occurred shortly after Beethoven's birth when the piano, originally invented in the early years of the century, was endowed with the sustaining pedal, thus radically altering the expressive qualities and sonority of the instrument. This would have far-reaching effects on the music which composers would subsequently write for the piano. Also, the increased volume and strength of the new instrument made it the ideal first-choice of the virtuoso who now could enter into orchestral partnership on more equal terms.

It was into this fecund environment that John Field was born on July 26, 1782, in Dublin, Ireland. That he was later to be considered the greatest pianist of his time, a reputation gained largely through his seven piano concertos, or that, like Chopin, all his works would involve the piano is not a surprising disclosure. Both his father and grandfather were musicians, his father a violinist in the orchestra of the Theatre Royal, and his grandfather on his father's side an organist at a Dublin church, as well as a

respected teacher of both organ and piano. It was from the latter that Field received his first piano lessons whilst his practising was supervised by his father, the whole family accommodated under the one roof. The rigorous instruction and the frequent beatings he received finally caused him to leave home and only hunger eventually drove him back to his relentless taskmasters. In 1791 Field was sent to Tommaso Giordani, a leading figure in Dublin's musical life and whose operas were regularly performed, for a course of 'finishing' lessons. Giordani soon billed Field to appear at three *Spiritual Concerts* during 1792, at the second of which he played a concerto by Giordani. These three appearances where Field, although nearly ten, was being advertised as eight years of age, aroused considerably interest and his playing received high praise from press and public alike. Contemporaneous with his early success as a virtuoso pianist was the production of his first compositions – an arrangement for piano solo of an Irish air, two Rondos for piano on songs by Giordani, and a Rondo in A major, based on a hornpipe as danced by Signora Del Caro, an admired ballerina of the 1790s.

In 1793 Field left Ireland with his family bound for England, unaware, at that juncture, that he would never return. His father had been invited to become leader of the orchestra at the Bath concerts, but the family subsequently remained at Bath only for a few months before a seemingly inferior post as a violinist at the Haymarket Theatre in London caused them to move again. Many celebrated pianists were living in London in 1793, among them Dussek, Gyrowetz, and J B Cramer, a former pupil of Clementi, and so it was natural that the question of Field's future should become of prime importance. He was apprenticed to Clementi for a fee of one hundred guineas, becoming both his pupil and a salesman in the London shop, part of his duties being to play over music to

the customers and especially to display the firm's pianos; Field was kept at this for five years. Clementi, for his part, was responsible for Field's entire education, not only his piano playing, and encouraged his development as a performer by having Field make his London debut in May 1794, playing a Clementi Sonata. Great predictions were made for his future, including the following entry in Haydn's diary: 'Field a young boy, which [*sic*] plays the pianoforte extremely well' which, if not grammatically correct, must still have given copious encouragement to the young pianist. In addition to piano tuition, Field also studied the violin, along with the violin prodigy, G F Pinto, under Johann Peter Salomon, and was a capable violinist, although preferring the viola in quartet-playing in later years.

The First Piano Concerto was performed on February 7, 1799, with Field as soloist, in a Pinto benefit concert at the Haymarket Theatre, and this won for Field his first success as a composer in his own right, appearing, as it did, the first major work after earlier mere bagatelles on borrowed themes. Not only was his expertise at the keyboard highly applauded, but also his natural talent for composition received high praise, and it became obvious to Clementi that his pupil would now benefit greatly from a wider musical experience than was currently available in London. Consequently in August, 1802, Clementi took Field to Paris, where, at soirées arranged by Ignaz Pleyel, he made a sensation with performances not only of his own works (probably the three piano sonatas and the First Concerto), but also with works by Clementi, and recitals, from memory, of Bach's '48' and works by Handel. Vienna was the next destination, where Clementi had intended that Field should remain whilst he himself journeyed on to Russia. It was Clementi's intention to set his pupil to study with Albrechtsberger in order that Field's

contrapuntal technique and grasp of basic formal principles in composition might be radically improved upon. That Field was a credit to Clementi as a pianist was well and truly endorsed, but as a composer there were many things further to absorb and it was likely that Clementi's conscience was troubling him somewhat for having partly neglected this aspect of the apprenticeship. However, Field eventually persuaded his master that it would be better for him to travel to St Petersburg as well, and not to remain in Vienna. Whilst Clementi capitulated, it was with considerable reluctance that he did so, and the hitherto happy association between master and pupil began to deteriorate thenceforth. The increased costs involved in both men travelling to, and then residing in Russia, meant that stringent economies would have to be made to preserve the original budget.

Many interesting anecdotes exist concerning the harsh treatment which Field received at the hands of Clementi during the first few weeks following their arrival in St Petersburg in December, 1802. The master is here often depicted as the mean and jealous keeper, depriving his young pupil of all but the scantiest of clothing in the Russian winter and giving him a miserly allowance for his daily bread. Whilst there is an element of truth in these stories, Clementi was negotiating to open a piano showroom as soon as instruments could arrive from England. Once Field was re-established in his former employment, Clementi, skilled in social graces and an accomplished linguist, was able to concentrate on gaining admission to the places of importance where either he, or Field as his deputy, could play for an attractive fee. The fact that this fee always went to his master finally occasioned Field to arrange a situation where Clementi would be forced to pay for a dinner for twenty acquaintances, invited unbeknown to him. The importance of

this practical joke, a common enough happening at that time, was that it at last revealed the emergence of an independent spirit, stifled during his youth – John Field was blatantly aware of the location of his master's 'Achilles' heel'! Towards the end of Clementi's proposed stay in Russia, his attitude to his pupil, which had taken the severest knock after the dinner party episode, suddenly changed and introductions to some of Clementi's wealthy and aristocratic pupils were arranged for Field, with the result that, almost simultaneously, invitations to play and applications for lessons flooded in. Clementi's plans were taking shape; on his departure he would feel safe that his pupil's new popularity would create a new market for his own publications as well as his pianos. The tight grip he had held on his pupil could be relaxed as there was now no cause for Clementi to fear any possibly unfavourable comparisons with Field, with the English Channel now separating the two men!

When Clementi, having achieved the object of his journey to Russia, left for Berlin in 1803, Field remained behind and settled in St Petersburg, to look forward to the attractive prospects of freedom and affluence. His St Petersburg debut in 1804, at which he again played his First Piano Concerto, caused him to become an unparalleled success overnight and the whole of the city was caught by the Field 'fever'. He very quickly was to become the most celebrated pianist in Russia and the most sought-after teacher, as Clementi found when he returned for a visit, a year later. Field was afforded both the patronage and friendship of the nobility and, with them, he attended the opera as well as the important social occasions. At the former he no doubt heard the romantic and embellished melodies which were to issue forth from his fingers in the *Nocturnes* and the *cantilena* sections in the Concertos.

Over the next few years, Field was so much fêted that he became pleasure-loving and eccentric, forgetting appointments for lessons and leading a thoroughly Bohemian life, during which he had a succession of love affairs. In 1810 he married one of his best pupils, a Mademoiselle Percheron de Mouchy, nicknamed 'Percheretta' because of her coquettish disposition. Unfortunately she was unable to bring about much organisation in Field's life and already, by the year of their marriage, his fondness for alcohol had grown on him to such an extent that for long periods he was never completely sober. Although he often played at his best when slightly drunk, it did nothing for his disorderly daily routine nor made him any less lazy or absent-minded. The culmination came when Field failed to appear at the start of his annual benefit concert in 1810. The Chief of Police was ordered to locate him immediately and have him brought to the hall where the enormous audience was becoming more and more angry. Though visibly suffering from the effects of alcohol, he soon was able to win over the audience with his inspired, if not somewhat alcoholically-induced playing! This rather shameful affair signified the temporary end of Field's stay in Moscow, where he had now been living for some years, and was possibly partly instrumental in his deciding to return to St Petersburg. Field had written in 1811 to his actor friend Gebhard, who informed him that the Prussian pianist, Daniel Steibelt, had arrived in St Petersburg three years earlier and had soon established an important position for himself in its musical circles. In view of Steibelt's obvious popularity, Gebhard suggested that the two pianists should effect a direct exchange, which both men found mutually acceptable. Field certainly fared far better from his return to St Petersburg than did Steibelt who, along with many other refugees, found himself soon fleeing from Moscow after the arrival there of the French army under Napoleon. Almost immediately

Field re-established his immense popularity with his former audience and was once again accepted back into aristocratic circles.

Although Field was often reluctant to put pen to paper, it would seem certain that, by 1811, the Second Concerto was in existence, as might well have been the third, which could, in fact, possibly have been written earlier than the better-known Second Concerto. His ability to compose might have been somewhat stifled by his unhappy marital life. Whilst continuing to live with Percheretta, he found some consolation in his life-long affair with a Mademoiselle Charpentier who, in 1815, bore him a son, Leon. In fact, he was able to isolate himself from the obvious problems of his double life, and his musical output at this time was comparatively large. The year 1815 was one of great importance for Field, since he made more public appearances than usual during the Lent season, and he received an offer of the title 'Court Pianist', an offer which he refused with one of his customary puns: 'La cour n'est pas fait pour moi, et je ne sais pas lui faire la cour.' As has been said earlier, the complications of having an illegitimate son did not curb his musical output, and good progress was made with the Fifth Concerto, entitled *L'Incendie par l'Orage*, perhaps in imitation of Steibelt's work in the same cast, which had long been very popular. It should be stated at this juncture that the date of the Fourth Concerto is not precisely known. It was, however, an offer from the Leipzig publisher, *Breitkopf & Härtel*, to publish all Field's available and projected compositions, which marked this year as important. Almost immediately the first four concertos, the piano quintet (which incidentally was one of the first to use the normal string quartet as the piano's partner, the norm being Schubert's 'Trout' combination as seen in the works of Hummel, Cramer, Dussek and Steibelt), as well as several solo pieces were published. Whilst the attractions

to leave Russia for a European tour were always strong, Field remained in St Petersburg where, albeit briefly, he made a profound impression on Glinka during their few lessons together. Field's quotidian life suffered a further complication when, unexpectedly, he discovered that Percheretta was, after nine childless years, to have his child. Characteristically he remained oblivious to these new problems after Adrien was born in 1819, and this ultimately prompted Percheretta to leave Field and to earn a living as a successful teacher. Even now Field managed to produce good work, including the Sixth Concerto, although this is somewhat uneven, and to maintain his concert-giving activities.

Possibly as a result of his broken marriage, Field decided to leave St Petersburg once more and return to Moscow at the end of 1821; however, the city which he knew before 1812 no longer existed, and whilst things were improving, his new life-style there would only be a shadow of its former self. In 1822, he became very friendly with Hummel who was on a visit to Moscow, and whose works after this time (and somewhat before it – a change in his style having taken place from drier to a more romantic viewpoint) would suggest that Field's pianistic ideas had a meaningful influence on him. Field made a lot of money from his concerts, commanding higher fees than any other performer, and from his ever-increasing teaching clientele. The programme of his benefit concert in 1822 included the first movement of his newest concerto, No 7 in C minor, which he again included two years later, but he found the ideas for the completion of the work not forthcoming. The state of his health must account to some degree for his gradual withdrawal from the public eye and his silence as a composer during these least productive years of Field's career, from 1824 to 1831. After the publication of his Sixth

Concerto in 1823, nothing more appeared until 1832. Having long suffered from haemorrhoids and digestive troubles, the seeds of his fatal illness (cancer of the rectum) were already sown. His intemperance, which caused him to neglect engagements, was also seriously injurious to his failing health, and Moscow was alive with various scandals concerning his love affairs. Twice, in fact, was his death reported in 1828 and 1831, and on the latter occasion, as a consequence to a stinging reply published by Field, the paper concerned intimated that if he were willing, a tour of Europe might satisfy his ever-growing number of admirers outside Russia who had not heard him as a pianist for so long. Eventually Field did overcome his reluctance and left Moscow in 1831. His state of health made it vital that he should have a travelling companion, and his illegitimate son Leon, now sixteen, seemed an ideal choice. Leon Charpentier had developed into an infant prodigy, with the evident makings of a virtuoso pianist; he however developed an impressive vocal and histrionic ability, which later made him a star of the St Petersburg opera. A visit to Western Europe for the developing singer would give him an opportunity to study in France or Italy.

John Field's return to London in 1831, after an absence of thirty years, was naturally an event of great interest to its music lovers, although it did not afford him the unbridled admiration he had known in Russia. The London public was becoming increasingly more discerning and its interest had been more aroused by the presence of the young Mendelssohn than by the arrival of Field, who was still not very well known in England as a composer. However, Field's first object on reaching London was to find a cure for, or at least relief from, his physical problems, not to re-establish himself in the city's musical life. An operation by Astley Cooper, the leading English surgeon of the

day, actually did succeed in giving him some temporary relief. In 1832, Field did perform his Fourth Concerto at the opening concert of the Philharmonic Society's season, and the work and its performance were well received, though not rapturously. During the visit Clementi died, and Field was one of the chief mourners at his funeral at Westminster Abbey. Before Field left London for Paris, prompted partly by the death of his mother, with whom he had been reunited merely for a year, he had met Mendelssohn, whose success with his Concerto in G minor had somewhat eclipsed Field's own Fourth Concerto. The more immediate appeal of the former's concerto made it the firmest of favourites with London's music-lovers, and must have accounted for the unusual celerity with which Field decided to leave England for Europe where, since 1815, his works were far better known.

Field's concerts in Paris coincided with the moment when the art of piano-playing was forging new paths. Liszt, Chopin and Alkan were among the foremost pianists there at the time and it is not surprising that Field might have felt his art rather passé, a situation to which he had been averted by his experience with Mendelssohn. Nevertheless, he made a very favourable impression, in 1832, with his playing of his own Seventh Concerto (which had been eventually completed either before he left Russia or during the year he spent in London) with all save his younger rivals. Various derogatory remarks were passed between Chopin, Liszt and Field, but these did not seriously affect the reception Field got on the other occasions at which he performed in public. On the contrary, Joseph d'Ortique, a critic who particularly admired Field's scoring in the Seventh Concerto, wrote, in his *Balcon de l'Opéra*, 1833: 'As a pianist Field has no rival, whether as regards genre or method. He has no adopted system and is of no school …

Field is Field … a school of his own'. These Paris concerts came at the start of an extended tour, prompted to some degree by the fact that neither in London nor in Paris had Field really received the level of acclaim to which he had been accustomed earlier in Russia. Early in 1833 Field gave the first of two concerts in Brussels, both a great success, playing after that in Toulouse, Marseilles and Lyons, before moving on to Geneva. Here, the second concert, a fortnight after the first, was merely a repeat of the same programme, including the Sixth Concerto, the *Midi* Rondo with quartet accompaniment, together with some solo pieces. Whilst his reputation was again on the increase, the converse was true in the matter of his failing health. Still accompanied by his son, Leon, his sojourn and concerts in Milan were his last appearances in Italy, for his departure for Florence was to consult again with a celebrated French physician, Baron Dupuytren, before struggling on, finally to arrive in Naples in 1834. Here he was taken ill and lay in hospital for nine months, undergoing numerous operations for fistula. During his stay in hospital, Field refused to let friends of pupils know of his condition, until news of his plight became known to a party of visiting Russian tourists, the Rachmanoffs, who were leading members of Moscow society. They removed him from hospital and he stayed with them first in Ischia, where the thermal springs helped him to recuperate in preparation for his long and arduous journey with them, and Leon, back to Russia.

On the journey northwards Field stayed in Vienna, first at a local hostelry, and later with Czerny whose extremely large output caused Field to dub him 'a living inkpot'. His health had shown signs of improvement and he began writing and playing once more, including the recently-printed Seventh Concerto at the last of his three concerts in that city. Though Field liked Vienna, he decided to leave for Moscow together with his new

benefactors. Here, he and his son were obliged to part as Leon's voice had developed sufficiently, during his training in Paris and possibly in Naples, for him to leave for St Petersburg to commence his long career as an opera singer, under the name of Leonov. Consolation for this loss came almost immediately in the shape of Field's other son, Adrien, who, now seventeen, had gone to Moscow in the hope of continuing his studies as a pianist with his famous father. Unfortunately for him, it was now too late for Field to make anything of his younger son's talents. Curiously enough, after his father's death, Adrien took to drink, and ended his life as a mere dance pianist, scraping a living in taverns and public ballrooms. Although Field had only little more than a year to live, he endeavoured to carry on a normal life, though seriously hampered by his chronic condition. As his illness progressed, he was no longer able to sit in a chair without the aid of a specially-made rubber cushion, but even now continued to make occasional public appearances, though only as a supporting artist at various benefit concerts. His last performance seems to have taken place at a soirée in March, 1836, but it was not until December that death became imminent; whilst his illness had not relented, it was, in fact, as a result of an attack of pneumonia, following a chill caught during the severe weather of December, 1836, that death would come. He struggled to overcome his severe bronchial trouble for two weeks, but in vain. John Field died on January 11, 1837 and was given a public funeral and burial at the Vedensky Cemetery, on the outskirts of Moscow. A monument to his memory was erected by his near circle of friends together with past pupils.

John Field's place in musical history rests if not solely on his invention of the *Nocturne* and its subsequent flowering in the works of Chopin. From the biographical

details of his strange and colourful life, it becomes apparent that his seven piano concertos, and, of course, his playing of them, must be considered in a more serious light, if a truer picture of this most individual of Irishmen, and of his influence particularly on Chopin, is to be attained. Possibly, as will be shown later, Field's sense of construction is often suspect on the larger canvas of an extended work for piano and orchestra, and has largely accounted for the fact that his concertos have mainly been neglected in the concert hall and the recording studio. From the plethora of works of this genre which abound in the early stages of Romanticism in music, it is not surprising that out of Field's seven concertos perhaps only two or three would hold any lasting position (No. 2, No. 3 and No. 7), and even these would be in a similar compartment as Hummel's A minor Concerto, Op 85, or even Mendelssohn's Second Concerto in D minor, Op 40; when a change from the accepted repertoire works is needed, these can, and do offer a refreshing substitute. Chopin's two concertos were a necessary stage in his development, both as a creative artist and as a performing musician with a public to impress. They show him unhappy in such large-scale compositions, particularly in their orchestration, a department where Field has much greater prowess. It would thus be natural to assume that had Chopin, in fact, needed to write even five concertos, then, like Field's perhaps only two or three would remain as relatively well-known to the general public. In composing seven concertos, works which, of necessity, must include 'something for everyone', it is understandable to find rambling passages and clichés in Field's work. But, amongst these uncertainties, there are points of great subtlety which, if only Field, with greater self-criticism, could have presented in a more consistent form, could then

have afforded him possibly a position in musical history of slightly greater import than 'inventor of the *Nocturne*' would suggest.

THE CONCERTOS (1799 – 1832)

Many composers had contributed to the development of the classical concerto form since the works of Mozart. Beethoven's five piano concertos show a constant attempt to mould the formal elements, in particular the problems of the first *tutti*, into a more musically satisfying whole. The composers whose work played a part in the formation of Field's own concerto style must naturally include, in the first instance, his teachers Giordani and Clementi. The former's influence can be seen in the frequently-used two-movement form in his concertos, which Field himself employed in the Third and Seventh Concertos, as well as in the three sonatas and some of the chamber music. Clementi's concertos are well made, with formal observances worthy of such an eminent pedagogue, though lacking in any true creativity. The decorated *cantabile* style in parts of Dussek's concertos can be seen as embryonic for Field, who was at his most youthfully receptive age when Dussek was a leading figure in London's musical life. Steibelt, with whom Field was in direct competition in St Petersburg, had also been earlier in London, when his Second and Third Concertos met with great success. This Third Concerto contains a rondo, in which a storm is quite naïvely depicted, and which became the rage not only in London, but throughout Europe. Perhaps in order to oust it from its popular position Field later wrote his own Fifth Concerto entitled *L'Incendie par l'Orage*. Of more direct significance was the fact that Steibelt's concerto used a Scottish air as the basis of the slow movement. This practice had earlier been well established by J C Bach, and Steibelt would certainly have been aware that such an inclusion would have gone down extremely well with the public at that time. Earlier, George Griffin, one of Field's greatest rivals, had just introduced his own concerto which contained a movement based on *The Blue*

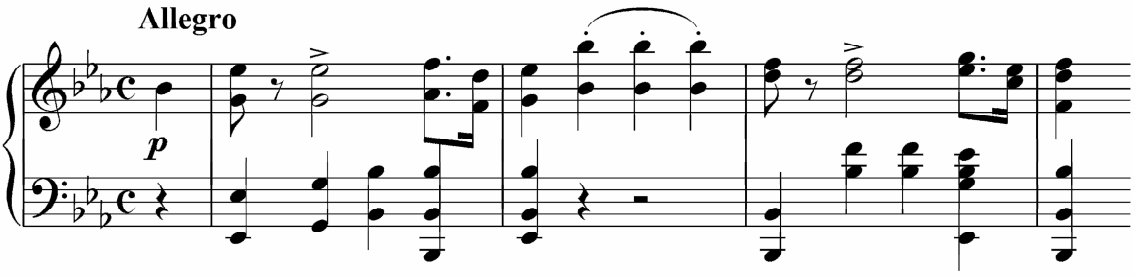
Bells of Scotland, and these two successes no doubt influenced Field's decision to employ a popular 'Scottish' air (actually by the contemporary English composer, James Hook) as the second movement of his debut concerto.

It is now proposed to discuss each of the seven concertos individually, before considering them again collectively, under more defined and broader headings:

CONCERTO NO. 1 IN E FLAT MAJOR

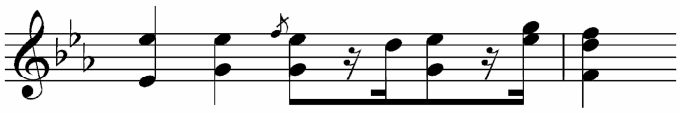
Field's First Concerto was first performed on February 7, 1799, at the King's Theatre, London, when Field was seventeen. As an early work in the composer's output, it is not consistently imbued with those features which mark the more romantic works of Field, whilst at the same time certain elements are plainly prophetic of things to come. The orchestral resources require one flute, two each of oboes, bassoons, horns and trumpets, a pair of timpani and the usual string complement, with cellos and basses almost totally identical, a customary practice until about 1800. Whilst these resources are fairly large, they are subtly deployed in the opening *tutti* which commences with a first subject, Mozartian in style:

Ex. 1



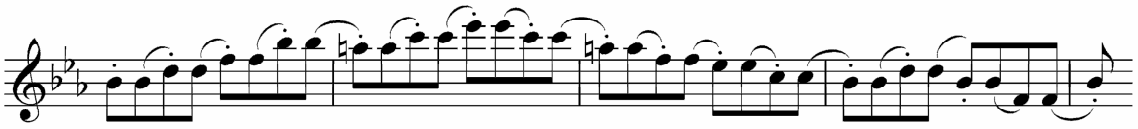
After only six bars of this tonic/dominant dialogue, there appears a typical 'skipped' rhythm-pattern often used by Field at cadential points (e.g. opening of Second, Third, and Sixth Concertos):

Ex. 2



The opening material is then re-introduced, more fully orchestrated, and with greater motion imparted by the violas' *Alberti* figuration, and subsequently leads, by means of two characteristic pedal points, to the second subject, introduced by first violins:

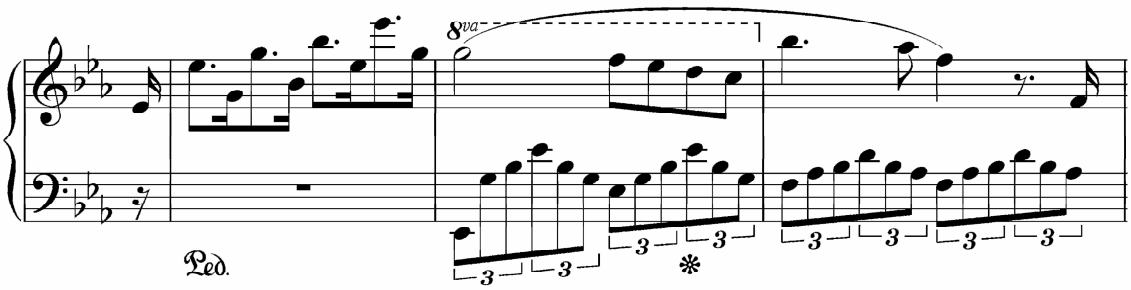
Ex.3



It will be noticed that Field introduces the second subject in the dominant, in the opening *tutti.* Mozart, only in two concertos (K. 413 & 449) and Beethoven (No. 3 in C Minor) also previewed the second subject in the dominant, and Field was, no doubt, of the opinion that, as he did not intend to use any of the thematic material of the first subject in the piano's exposition nor in the development, the use of a double exposition with its slight upset by duplication, of the essential tonic-dominant-tonic character of sonata form was excusable. Indeed, whilst the opening *tutti* is tastefully orchestrated, Field used sometimes to play the first movement as an unaccompanied solo piece, completely omitting the *tuttis*; this, to some degree, indicated the amount of importance which he placed on his orchestral passages from the structural standpoint, and led composers such as Mendelssohn to seek a situation where *tutti* and soloist would simultaneously give out

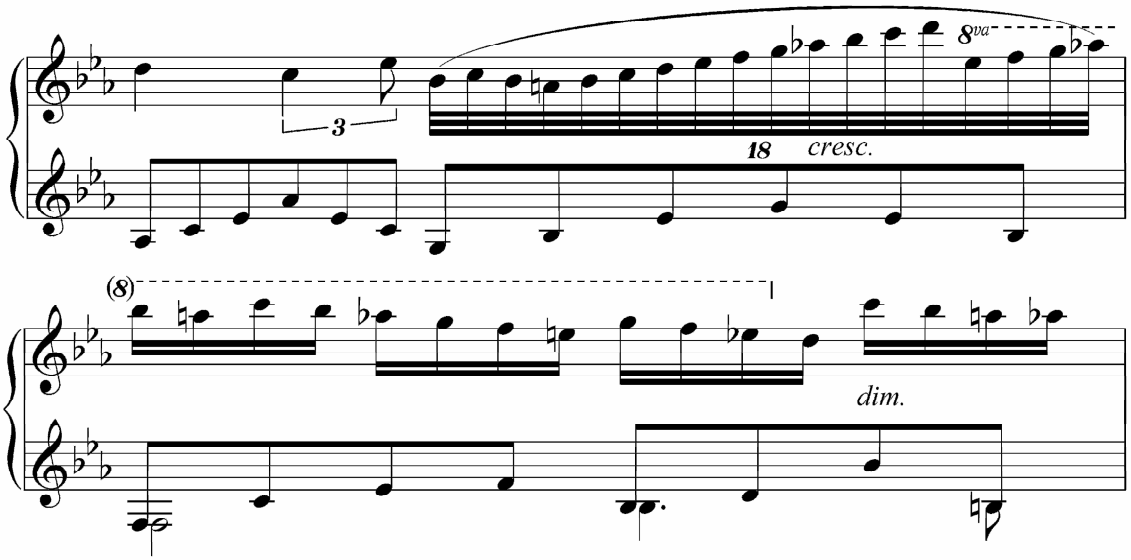
thematic material (his G minor Concerto). The opening theme, now assuming more martial qualities with the aid of trumpets and timpani, once more appears, before the dynamics then subside to a *pianissimo* to herald the piano's entry. After nine bars of decorative passage-work a new theme, slightly reminiscent of the prelude from *La Traviata*, emerges; its treatment, over sustained violins and violas with *pizzicato* cellos and basses, is equally suggestive of Beethoven;

Ex. 4



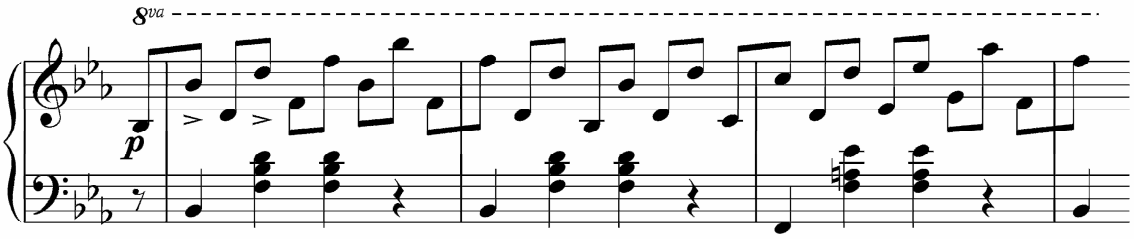
The *fioriture*, so characteristic of Field, and, of course, Chopin, is seen emerging some ten bars later:

Ex. 5



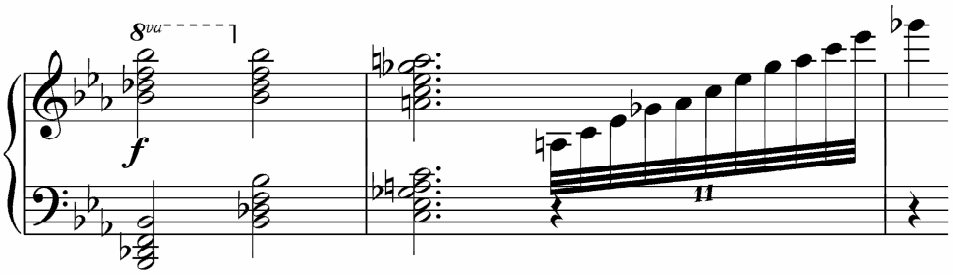
Passage work, lightly accompanied by strings, leads to the second subject which is now skilfully altered by Field to employ what is, in fact, a technical feature of the piano part – broken octaves:

Ex. 6



The sequential and often scalic passage-work then resumes, again with a light string accompaniment, and leads, via the conventional dominant trill, to the closing *tutti* in which the full orchestral resources combine to round off the exposition on a triumphant note. Again the dynamics subside ultimately to end this section in the dominant, before the piano storms in, with thickly-written chords, beginning the development in the dominant minor:

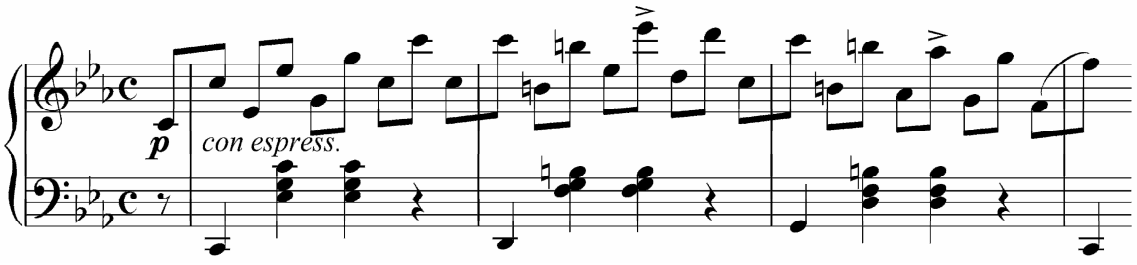
Ex. 7



The opening of the development is dramatic enough with string *tremolos* and soft timpani rolls leading into more semiquaver passage-work over a rising bass which comes to rest

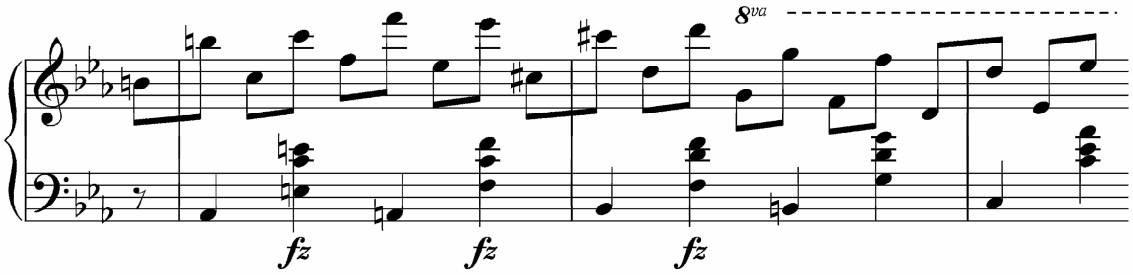
on a unison G. After a brief pause, Field introduces a far more poetic treatment of the second subject, now in the more sombre cloak of C minor:

Ex. 8



Further passage-work leads from C minor, albeit rather abruptly, into dominant harmony to prepare for the recapitulation. Here, however, Field chooses to ignore the first subject and proceeds straightway with the second subject, which he soon varies by firstly introducing triplets into the broken-octave pattern and later by the more consistent adoption of an *Alberti* bass. The last three bars, before the final passage-work, show a much more harmonically enterprising use of the thematic material and exhibit the type of modulating progression later much used by Chopin:

Ex. 9

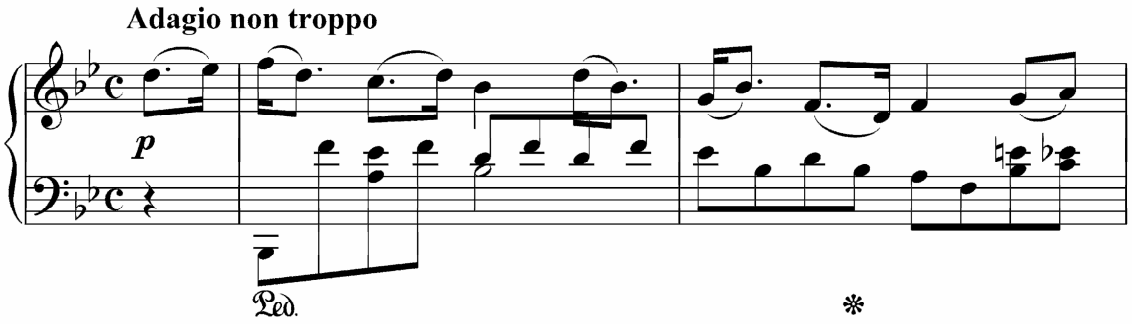


From this point onwards, it is plain sailing; the clichés, which include an enharmonic approach to the dominant pedal, itself eight bars in length, and for piano and cellos/basses only and the concluding trill, are nevertheless tastefully employed and lead to the final

orchestral *tutti*. This contains new material, but of the predictable cadential variety; Field, when he played the first movement as a solo, substituted a coda, merely four bars in length in preference to these otherwise ten bars of orchestral *tutti*.

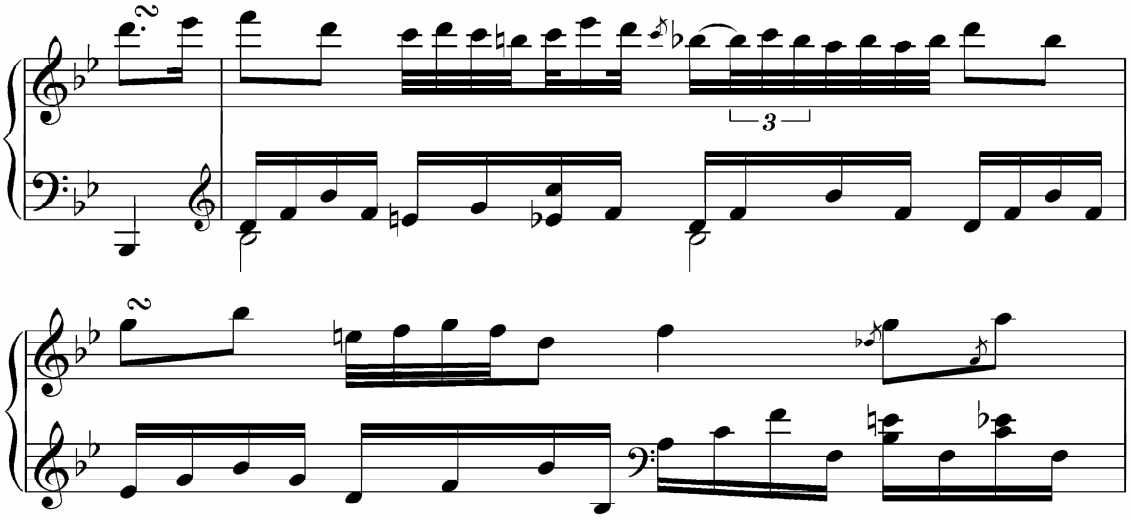
The second movement consists of two variations on James Hook's song '*Twas within a mile of Edinboro' Town* – the precedents for this type of usage have been mentioned above. Field presents the song very simply at first and, as is usual in his manuscript versions, the piano is included in the *tutti* sections, should a performance without orchestra be envisaged. The piano part is doubled by strings, with flute and horns added later to highlight various melodic phrases:

Ex. 10



The 'Scotch Snap' appears frequently throughout the movement, but its use, in the works of Field, is restricted mainly to his very early compositions (this concerto, Second Sonata and the *Pastoral* in A) and occasionally as a decorative element in concerto passage-work. In fact it hardly appears at all in his one obvious 'Scottish' piece, the *Rondo Écossais*. At the conclusion of the theme and its two variations, a brief *cadenza* is introduced in the piano part, before the final cadence. The first variation is accompanied by strings alone, the piano decorating the theme with *arabesque*-like figures:

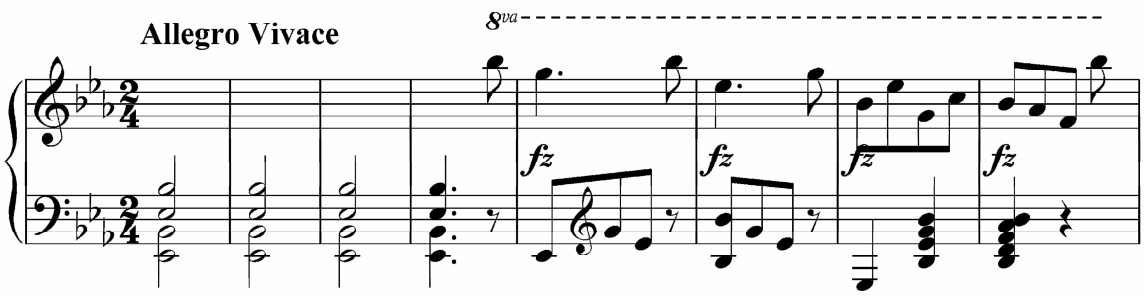
Ex.11



The second variation begins with piano solo, this time embroidering the theme with broken-chord figurations; strings are gradually added (*pizzicato*), as are the horns and the three solo woodwind instruments. A brief coda allows the pianist a final opportunity to refer to the theme before ending with a right-hand run aver a left-hand *tremolo*, supported by a tonic pedal in the orchestra. This movement is of some importance in that it is the first of Field's pieces to exhibit his *nocturne* style, in embryonic form. It relies on its effect by the conscious avoidance of contrasts, either of key (B flat throughout), dynamics (*p* or *pp*) or tempo.

The final rondo makes an extensive use of the keyboard's highest register and demands a fluent right-hand technique from the performer. The opening four-bar introduction imitates the drones of a bagpipe, before the piano enters with a childlike theme, based on a 'cuckoo' motif:

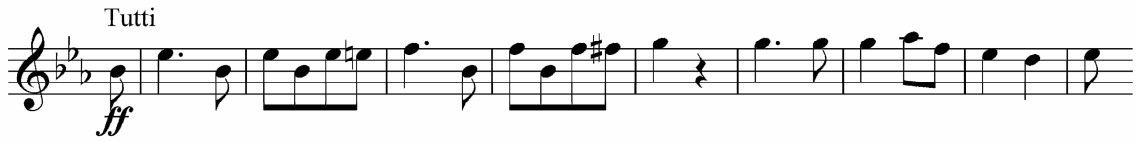
Ex. 12



Although the drone affect continues after the piano's entry, and is taken up by the orchestra whenever the rondo theme re-appears, this effect and the 'Scotch Snaps' in bars 113/114, did not appear in the manuscript text, suggesting that they were added as an afterthought. It has been suggested that the concerto was planned in a two-movement format (c.f. the next important work, the Sonatas, Op. 1), and that the addition of the *Air*

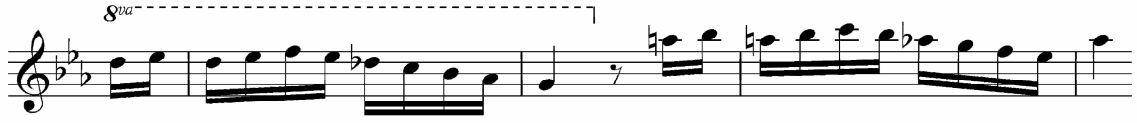
Écossais, possibly as a result of the successful interpolations in Griffin's and Steibelt's concertos, prompted Field to add an extra touch of local colour in the finale to suggest a more unified conception. The Mozartian touches abound in this movement, especially in the *tutti* which concludes the first appearance of the rondo theme:

Ex. 13



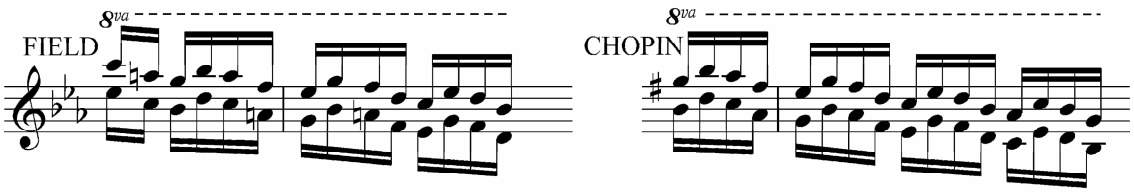
Otherwise, the rondo unfolds, with few, if any, surprises. The first episode begins in the subdominant:

Ex. 14



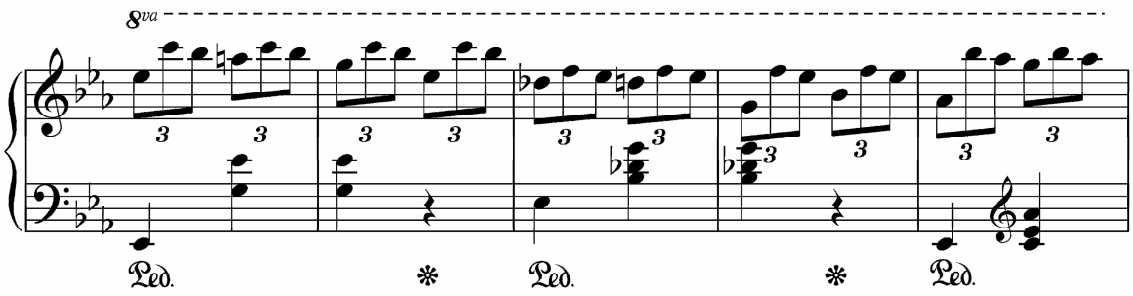
However, within the space of a few bars it is repeated in D flat, and from here, via B flat minor, it leads to a brief statement of the rondo theme, now in the dominant, by piano solo. The first episode's theme then provides the thematic material which will lead ultimately to the rondo theme's return; shortly before this return Field uses a *bravura* pattern often subsequently used by Chopin (e.g. fourth bar after piano's entry in the E minor Concerto):

Ex. 15



The second episode begins in the tonic minor and explores the more remote flat keys. Here, Field carefully chooses the least confusing notation for the orchestral parts and the piano reduction respectively, reserving the grammatically more correct usage of double flats for the piano part only. The main contributor in this episode is the orchestra but a substantial section of passage-work for the pianist's right hand leads once more to the final statement of the rondo theme, given out initially as a solo and then over a characteristic seventeen-bar tonic pedal. Here in the coda, the piano indulges in what can easily be seen as Chopinesque treatment:

Ex. 16

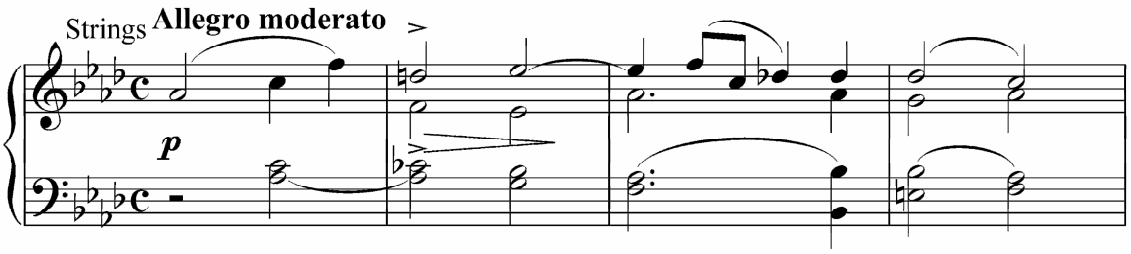


Although this concerto does not show the composer as fully-developed, it does, nevertheless, exhibit one or two pointers towards his later style. In the first movement Field omits a return to the first subject in the recapitulation (which Chopin also does in his Piano Sonatas in B flat minor and B minor), and there is a lot of passage-work not only to be seen again in Field's works, but also to be developed in the works of Chopin.

CONCERTO NO. 2 IN A FLAT MAJOR

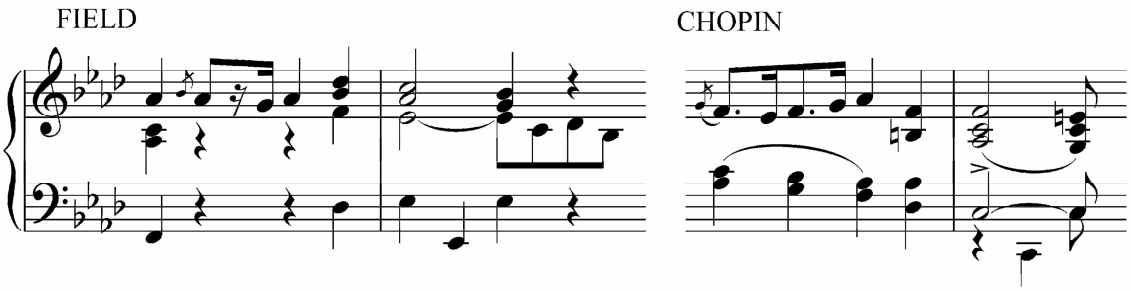
On first hearing the Second Concerto, it is immediately apparent that it manifests a considerable advance over its predecessor. This once-celebrated concerto was admired and taught by Chopin, was thought 'divine' by Schumann, and was a staple part of the virtuoso's repertoire during much of the nineteenth century; it is not possible exactly to determine its date of composition, but there is evidence to confirm that it was in existence by 1811 at the latest. It is scored for the same resources as the First Concerto, except that oboes are replaced by clarinets, and the cello line shows a marked liberation from the bass line, especially in the second movement (five staves throughout) and in the coda to the final rondo. It is also interesting to note that Field retains his same pairing of timpani as in the earlier concerto (E flat/B flat), thereby denying direct reinforcement of the tonic in this concerto. However the opening is a far cry from the vigorous martial rhythms of the First Concerto, where trumpets and drums had been a pre-requisite:

Ex. 17



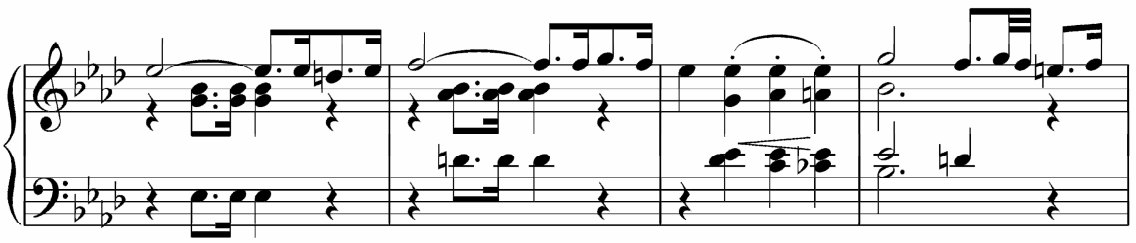
The first subject, given out by strings alone, exhibits, at its half close, a characteristic 'skipped' rhythm; it has been said that this concerto, especially the opening movement, served Chopin as a model for his F minor Concerto (No. 2, though written before No. 1 in E minor), and certainly similarities, partly accentuated by the shared key signature, can be observed:

Ex. 18



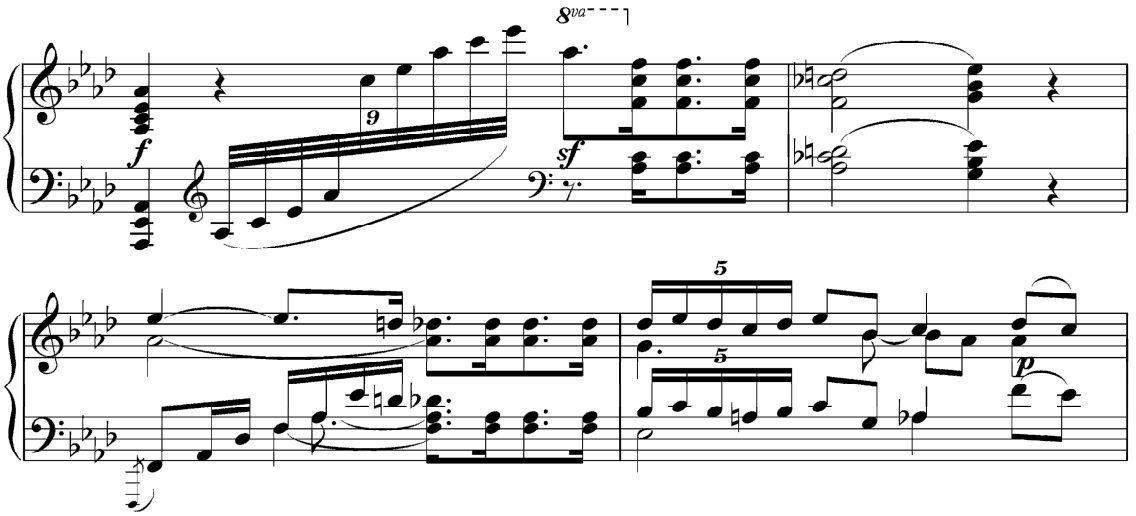
The repeat of the first subject, where strings are joined by clarinets, leads to a lengthy *tutti* section, with bustling string-writing, which culminates in the announcement, once more by strings only, of the second subject, again in the dominant and causing Field thus to write a true double exposition – the 'skipped' rhythms are again prominent:

Ex. 19



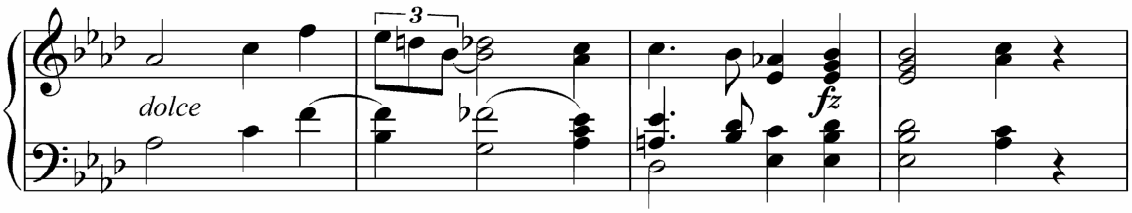
This soon gives place to a return of the lyrical opening theme, concluding the *tutti* in similar vein as at the outset. Whilst there has been some very effective scoring, and the thematic material has also been far more expansive than in the First Concerto, it is with the piano's first entry that Field establishes a new era, laying down the foundation on which the generation of romantic composers could build:

Ex. 20



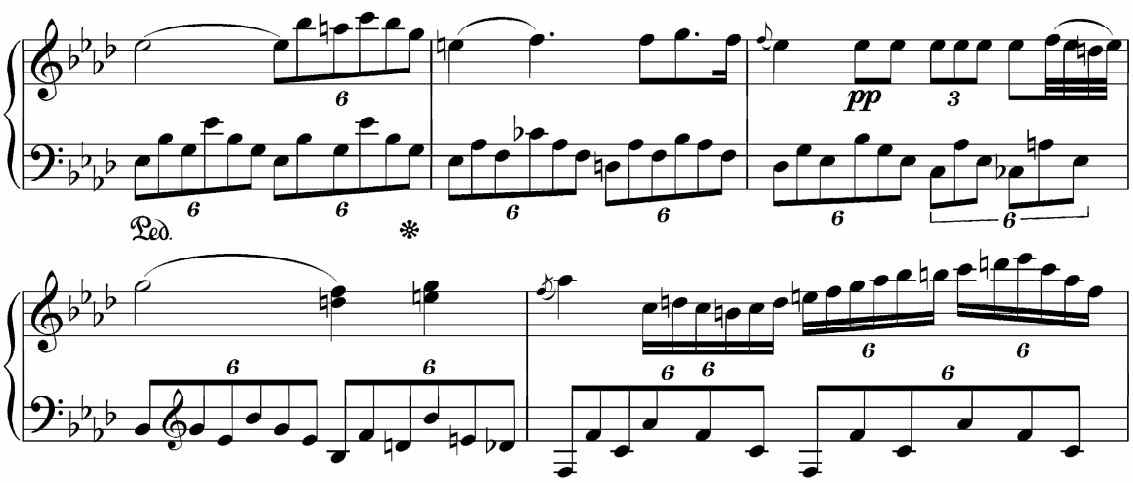
After twelve bars, in which this type of expansive piano-writing dominates, the soloist then leads off with filigree passage-work, accompanied by off-beat *pizzicato* chords – an example of Field's pianistically-effective writing managing to rescue an otherwise uninteresting passage harmonically from mere note-spinning, in order to permit a further opportunity for the soloist to develop the opening theme:

Ex. 21



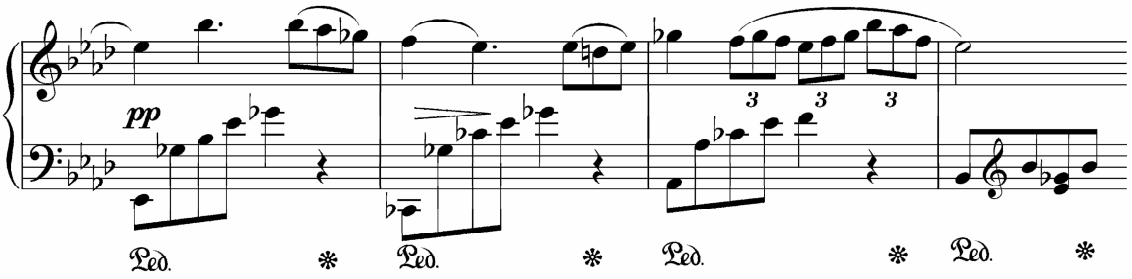
Then follows the preparation for, and lead-in to the second subject; the soloist decorates alternately bars of dominant and tonic harmony in the conventional second-subject key, with a familiar *pizzicato* bass line to give the passage further momentum. Finally, the piano, with a long and meandering run, announces the second subject as simply as the orchestral counterpart in the opening *tutti* above. Immediately, the soloist, against a sustained string background, then gives an embellished version – Field could certainly have given the first statement of the second subject to the orchestra alone, but in his concertos, and in those of Chopin, the piano tends to play continuously, or almost so, save for the between-section *tuttis* where the soloist can manage a well-earned rest. It must, however, be said that Field's accompanying use of the orchestra, as will be seen later, is considerably fuller and more imaginative than Chopin's:

Ex. 22



The closing idea of the second subject is again given twice to the soloist and whilst, as has been said earlier, better contrast might have been achieved with the first statement taken orchestrally, Field exhibits his *cantilena* writing for the solo instrument in one of its earliest examples. More will be said later on the operatic derivations and subsequent influence of this style of piano-writing:

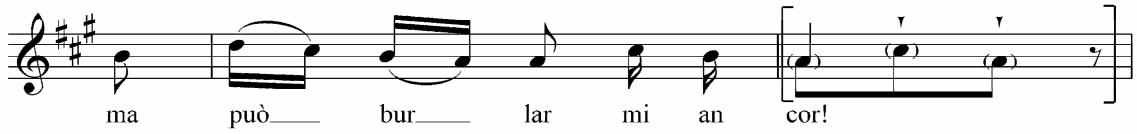
Ex. 23



The poignant mood of this last example is soon changed when the soloist embarks on a *bravura* passage, *con spirito*, which leads ultimately to the final *tutti* section of the exposition. During this closing section, much of the passage-work and technical patterns used by Field can clearly be seen again in the works of Chopin. This section also includes, shortly before the piano's concluding trill, a note-pattern which Field employed

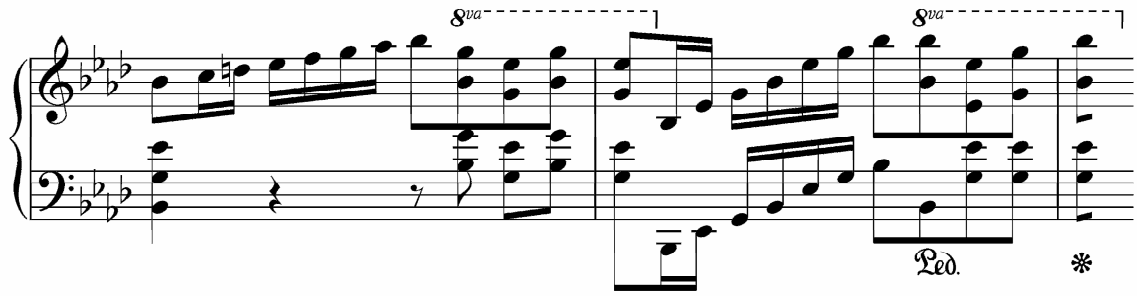
extensively in his works; the effect is that of a 'bell-like' motif, tonic-mediant-tonic, which he may well have heard at the opera, in the early years in Russia. It can be seen, for example, at the end of Zerlina's first solo in her Act I duet in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*:

Ex. 24



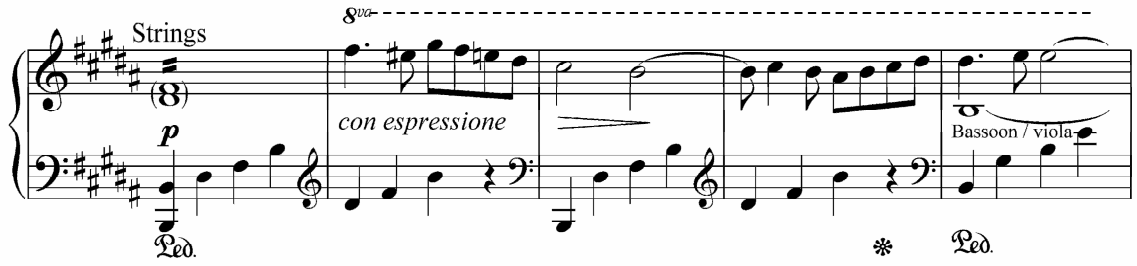
Field uses it here thus:

Ex. 25



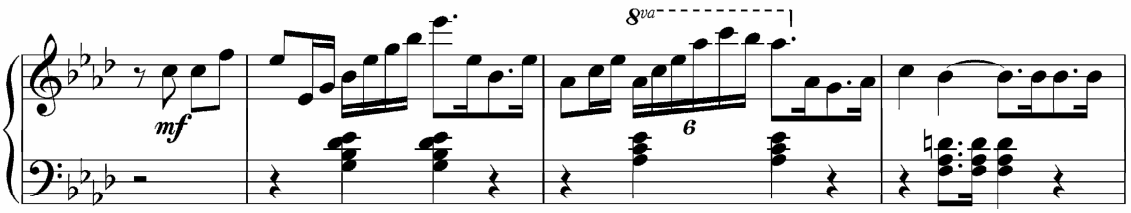
The soloist begins the development by boldly announcing his earlier first entry, now in E flat minor, before coming to rest after only fifteen bars in this key. Field is far more adventurous with regards to key contrasts in this movement, and the E flat minor start is now transformed into a long *cantilena* melody in B major, the piano playing against low *tremolando* chords in the strings, with the bassoon and viola adding small counter-melodies. Whilst the sustaining pedal of the piano is skilfully used, the *tremolo* accompaniment from the strings was certainly quite new in 1811, except for its use in the opera house – Chopin employed a similar device in the slow movement of his F minor Concerto:

Ex. 26



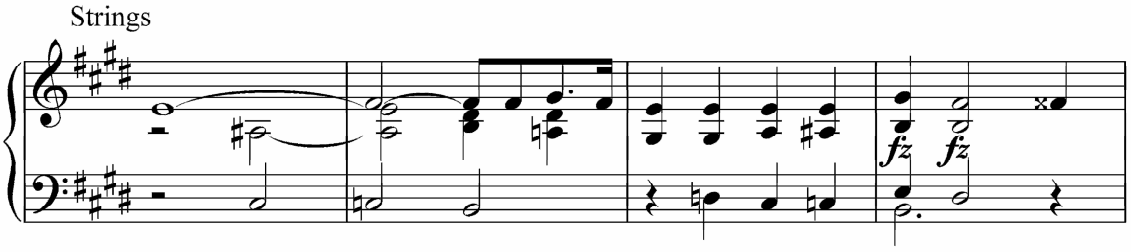
With this lyrical section over, the composer embarks on a series of modulations in which he reveals one of his main weaknesses – a sure sense of form, which is often seen lacking in some of his largest compositions. It is as if Field, after the obviously effective B major section with its entirely new melody, found himself a long way from the home tonality of the movement and tried, desperately, to extricate himself from this harmonic maze with a combination of short snatches of themes, interpolated arpeggios and passage-work, and somewhat uneasy key changes. It is some forty bars before the second subject, now in F major, emerges, only to be repeated in the minor, which then leads to a further section of passage-work, predominantly in F minor, with effective solo use of bassoons and clarinets. Throughout this long section, and the orchestral *tutti* which rounds it off, it is not difficult to move forward in time to the very reminiscent passages from Chopin's later F minor Concerto, both in pianistic treatment and in thematic material. Field concludes this *tutti* with a quiet statement of the first subject in F minor, before the soloist changes the mood again by introducing a spritely theme, against busy triplets in first violins and violas:

Ex. 27



Seven bars of passage-work from the soloist, over a dominant pedal from cellos and basses, then lead to the recapitulation, shortened in the orchestral statement to a mere five bars. The piano's entry mirrors, almost note-for-note, its corresponding section of the exposition, before the ensuing passage-work is abruptly terminated with a half-close. After a bar's pause, strings resume with a sustained statement, in E major, of the second subject, the sort of key 'side-stepping' of which Beethoven, and, later, Chopin were fond:

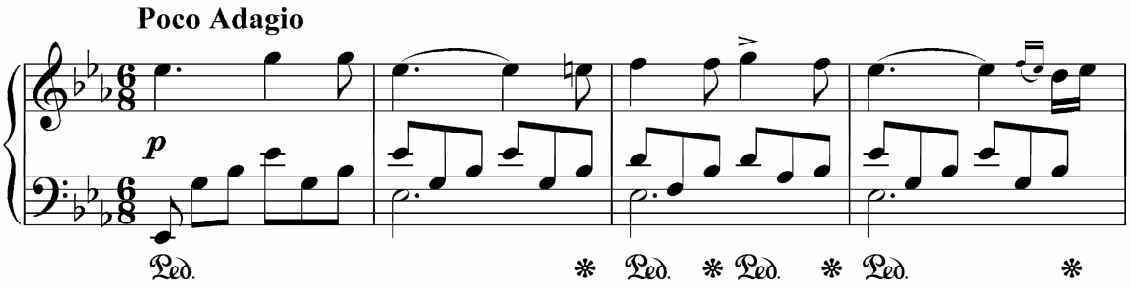
Ex.28



Very soon, the tonic key is re-introduced, enharmonically, and the recapitulation of the second subject and subsequent closing material is dealt with in conventional manner. The final trill in the solo part with its right hand in thirds and left-hand thumb and index finger trilling a sixth below the top represents a considerable thickening of texture at this, the soloist's final contribution; in later concertos, such as those of Chopin, or Grieg, further extensions of this final cadential trill can be seen. As in the First Concerto, the concluding *tutti* quickly brings the movement to a close, once the soloist's part is over.

The *Poco Adagio* is the first of Field's slow movements on original material (except for the *Pastorale* of the *Deuxième Divertissement*). Although it is as much a *Nocturne* as any of his pieces of that genre, it has never been included in any collected edition of them. It was, however, published separately as a romance, and, probably prompted by the guitar-like *pizzicato* second-violin part, Field, or his publisher possibly issued it with the title *Serenade*, in 1811. A third version, a manuscript now in America, is also extant and contains several important differences from either of the others. The basis of the slow movement again features the 'bell' motif, announced by the piano over a sustained background of muted strings, in five separate parts with basses and second violins largely *pizzicato*; the former limited, in the main, to the first beat of the bar, while the latter are active throughout, in imitation, with their arpeggio figures, of a guitar or mandolin accompaniment:

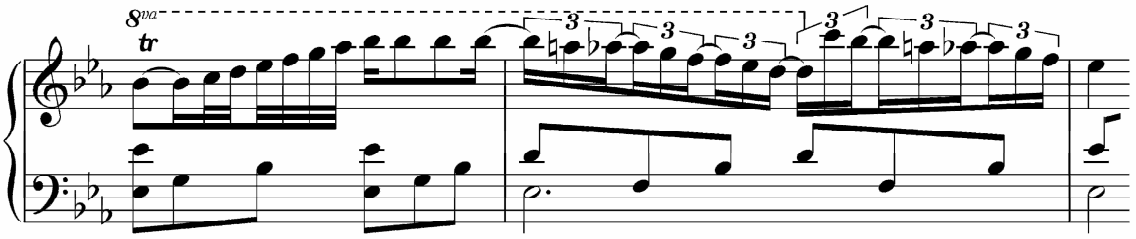
Ex. 29



Throughout the movement, Field's use of a tonic pedal adds to the dreamy mood conveyed in the opening bars. When he does work up to a climax, he follows this with a short *cadenza*, a device which was, especially in the works of Liszt, to become a feature of romantic piano Music. The delightful filigree patterns are nowhere better seen than shortly before the end of this movement, where, with their rising and falling line, another

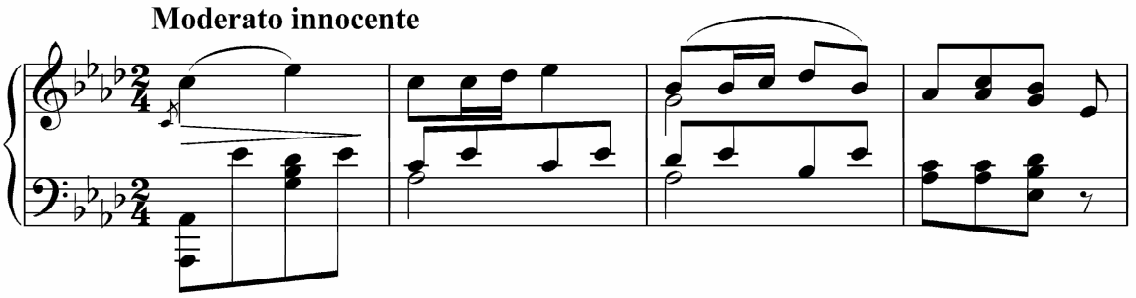
common melodic feature in Field's works, they cannot fail to suggest the endings of his first *Nocturne* or indeed of Chopin's familiar second *Nocturne*, E flat being the key in all three cases:

Ex. 30



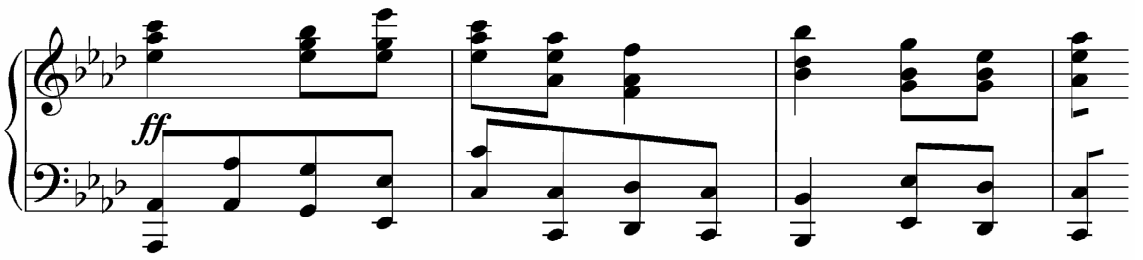
The concluding rondo is, without doubt, on the long side, but it still contains much of great interest. Its theme is first given out by the soloist and, in the thirty bars that follow, Field further embellishes it with semiquaver patterns, simple and in triplets, and with short *cadenzas*:

Ex. 31



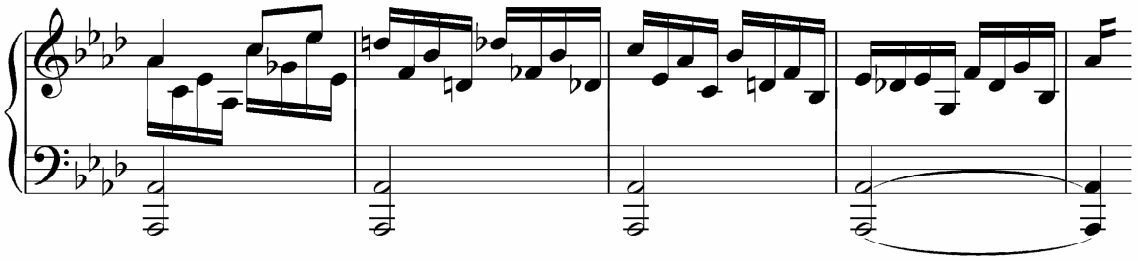
The ensuing orchestral passage is based on the following motif, to which the piano soon adds a decorative running line in semiquavers, the hands an octave apart:

Ex. 32



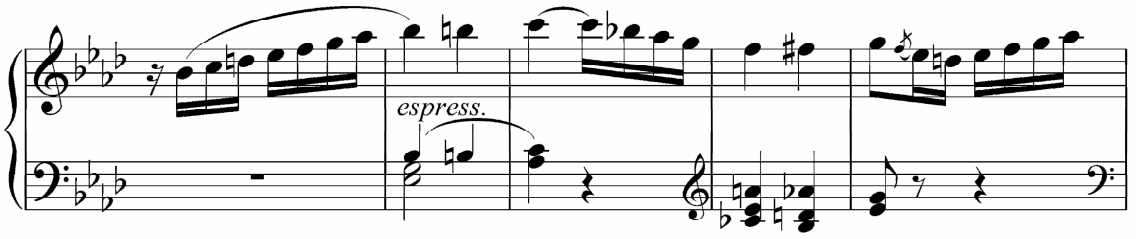
The concluding piano phrase, at the end of this opening section, is reminiscent of the end of Beethoven's Sonata in the same key, Op. 26:

Ex. 33



The piano then leads off with a decorated variant of the orchestral *tutti* theme quoted earlier, and this culminates in the soloist announcing the material of the first episode, the key having changed to the dominant:

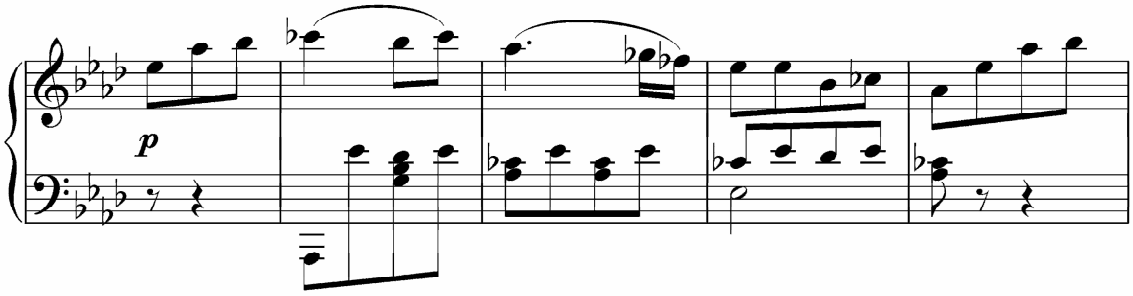
Ex. 34



This episode proceeds entertainingly enough, largely relying on the soloist's contribution for its momentum, with its brief excursion into the minor key, and its sprinkling of 'skipped' rhythms and 'Scotch Snaps'. A dominant pedal, some thirty bars in all,

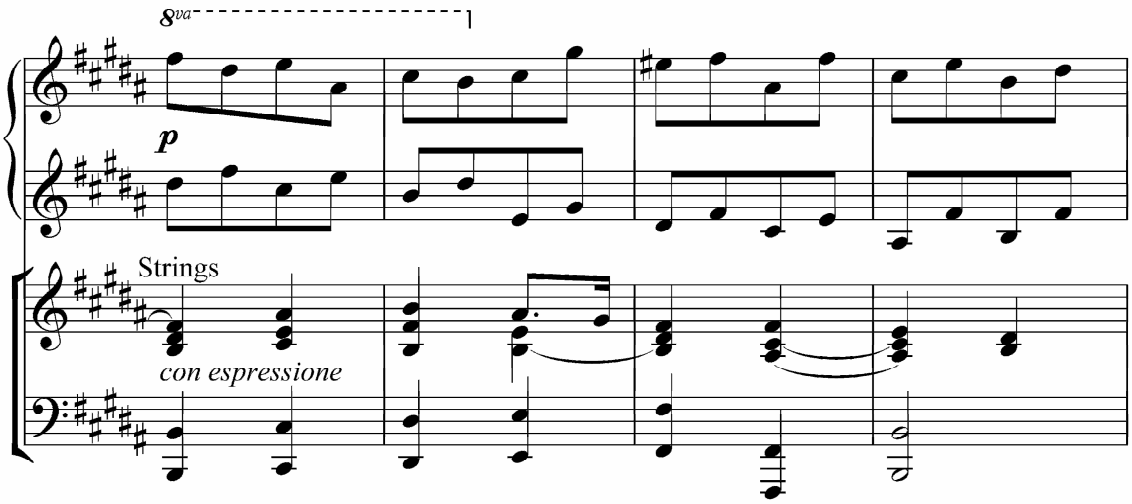
characteristically ushers in the rondo theme once more. Field presents it first in similar fashion to its repeat in the opening, before decorating it with running semiquavers in the piano's right hand and increasing the involvement of the violins, the whole supported now on a tonic and dominant drone-base. Local colour is indeed added by the clarinets and violas with their repeated E flats and acciaccaturas imitating the 'gracing' of the bagpipes. Field develops the rondo theme with a more varied harmonic palette of enharmonic modulations, but the expected use of a dominant pedal finally brings about a re-appearance of the closing *tutti*, now a mere eight bars, and the soloist embarks on the next episode, in the tonic minor:

Ex. 35



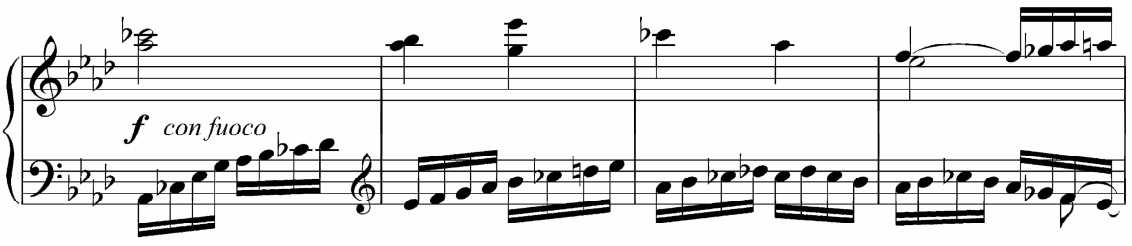
This soon leads to a middle section, in B major, which commences with a more tranquil theme from the strings, with the piano adding a *quasi* musical-box-like accompaniment:

Ex. 36



The gentle march-like character of this theme is given more impetus as the key changes to B minor, by the adoption of a *pizzicato* bass-line, short quaver chords from the strings, solo flute and bassoon, mainly at two octaves' distance, and by semiquaver broken-chord figuration from the piano's right hand. A short, terse figure ending in a trill then appears in first violins, before being used as the bass in a series of modulatory bars, each falling a fifth, until the dominant, E flat, is reached. After a few bars of *tutti*, the piano leads off into a development of the first orchestral passage quoted, in A flat minor now, and in augmentation:

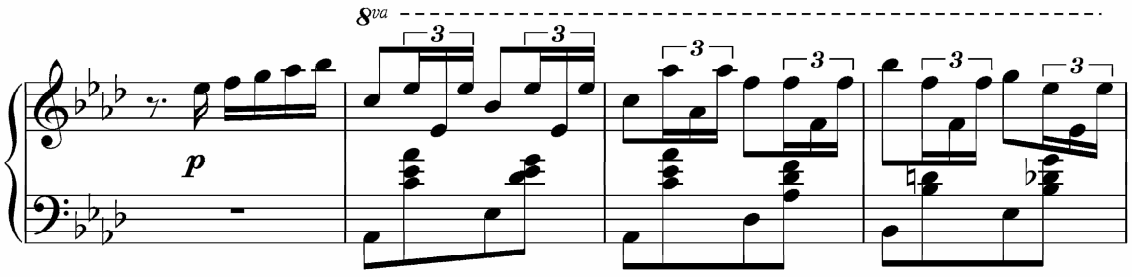
Ex. 37



The use of a running-bass, in this section, is a feature that Chopin was also to make extensive use of. Whilst Mozart had employed the same device, his use, and that of

Beethoven, tended to grow out of invertible counterpoint between both hands (e.g. the *Scherzo* from the Sonata in A flat, Op. 26); Field's use throughout this extended passage is not the result of this kind of interplay. On two occasions the run is taken over by the right hand and, at times, the right hand participates in the semiquaver motion in counterpoint to the left hand. This whole passage is treated as a lengthy *fugato*, something rare indeed in Field's work; it does possibly substantiate a statement by one of his Russian biographers that he underwent, about this time, a course of contrapuntal studies with the great theoretician, J H Miller, who was, for many years, an important figure in Russian musical circles and who numbered Glinka among his pupils. Whilst it seems hard to believe that Field would have the necessary mental discipline for a prolonged study of counterpoint, the effectiveness of this *fugato* at least confirms that he had acquired a working knowledge of the art. An orchestral *tutti* then sets the soloist off on a long meandering right-hand run, over the customary dominant pedal (fifteen bars), before a brief reference to the A flat minor theme leads to the final appearance of the rondo theme, firstly given out by woodwind, horns and timpani. The soloist then treats it in a decidedly Chopinesque manner:

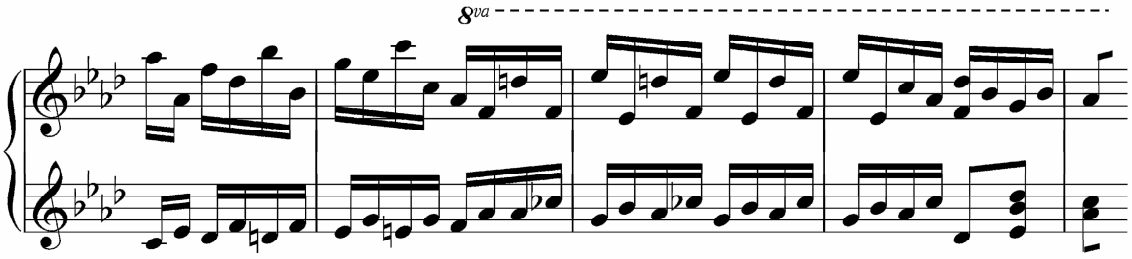
Ex. 38



The earlier orchestral passage referred to, provides Field with a further opportunity, with the aid of a running-bass again, for the soloist to embark on another brief *fugato* which

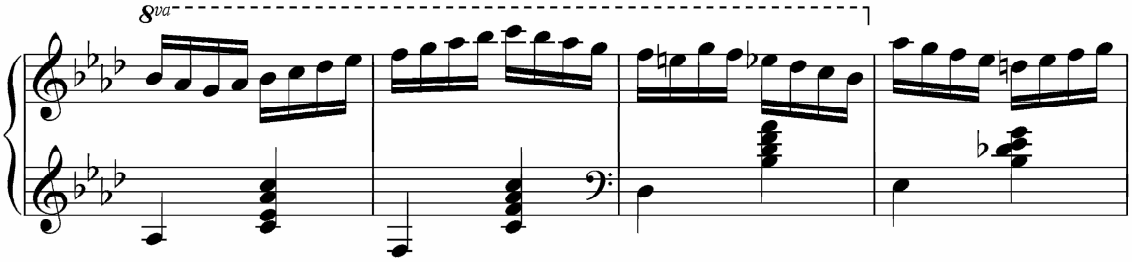
leads, after effective passage-work for both hands, into the extended coda. This begins with piano and strings repeating a bare-fifth drone of tonic and dominant, after which the soloist freely embroiders his left-hand theme with busy semiquavers in the right. Subsequently, both hands are involved with the passage-work, and whilst the strings continue their drone, solo clarinet and bassoon add the melodic-line. Throughout this concerto, particularly, a feature of Field's style has been evident – his use of short episodes of a few bars, usually repeated, which are separate and complete entities, frequently moulded out of chord sequences which embody some element of moving away from the tonic and back to it. The fina1 section of this coda offers two examples of this kind of writing:

Ex. 39



Immediately following is this episode, with its marching bass:

Ex. 40

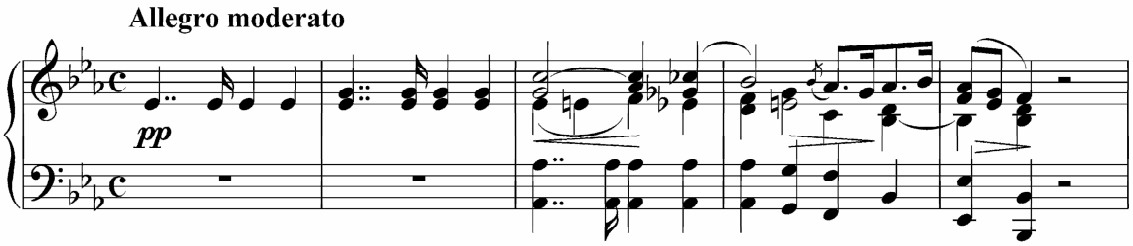


The music proceeds not by development, but by a succession of complete and finite ideas, again to be seen later in Chopin's style. The previous episode leads into the final section of passage-work, again reminiscent of Beethoven's Op. 26, over a long tonic pedal, the dynamic markings dropping to *ppp*. The soloist's final contribution quickly ushers in the concluding twelve-bar *tutti* and the concerto is brought to a bright and happy close. As a whole, this concerto, like all Field's longer works, suffers from his rather suspect grasp of form, but the appeal of its thematic material, its most effective piano-writing and romantic atmosphere easily account for its former popularity.

CONCERTO NO. 3 IN E FLAT MAJOR

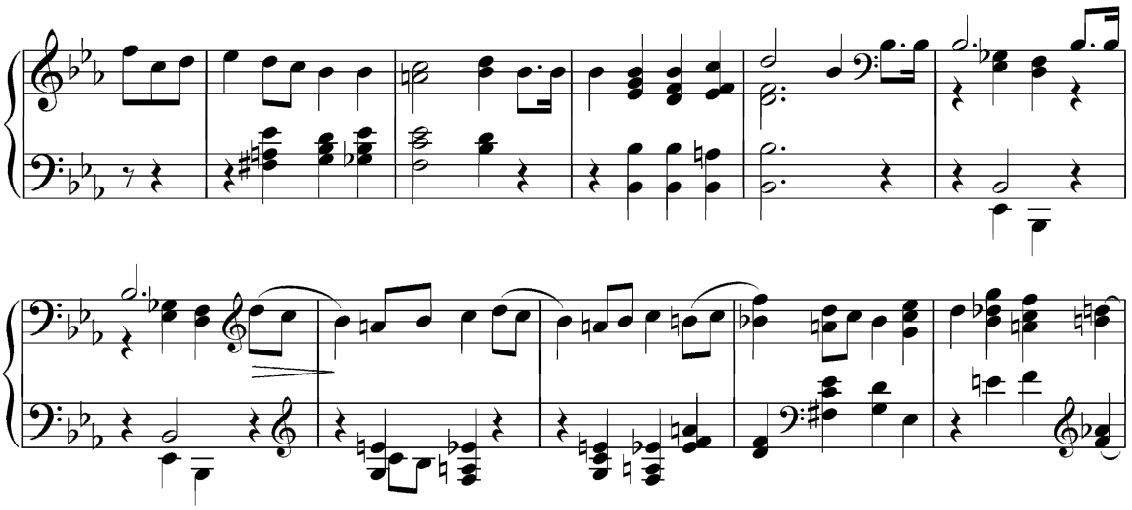
The Third Concerto reverts to the two-movement form which was a favourite with Field in his earlier works. Both movements are very long and brilliant, with the result that the concerto is not well balanced, needing more contrast. In later years, Field often preceded his performances of the rondo of this concerto with one of his *Nocturnes*; in fact, there exists an unpublished score of an orchestral accompaniment to the longest of the several versions of the Fifth *Nocturne*, suggesting that this was possibly the piece he used for the purpose. It is scored for the same orchestra as the previous two concertos, except that now both clarinets and oboes, together with two flutes, are used. The first subject is based on a repeated note in an uneven rhythm, with the characteristic 'skipped' pattern at the half-close:

Ex. 41



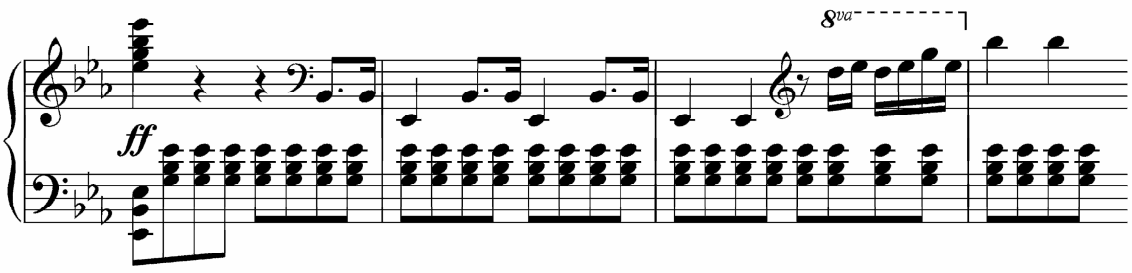
The full orchestral resources are then employed to develop the dotted rhythms of the opening three bars, against busy unison scale-passages from the strings. The approach to the second subject is conventional enough, but here a certain air of indecision is occasioned by the movement of this theme, backwards and forwards from its basic key, in nearly every bar, as if Field were note-spinning merely to mark time:

Ex. 42



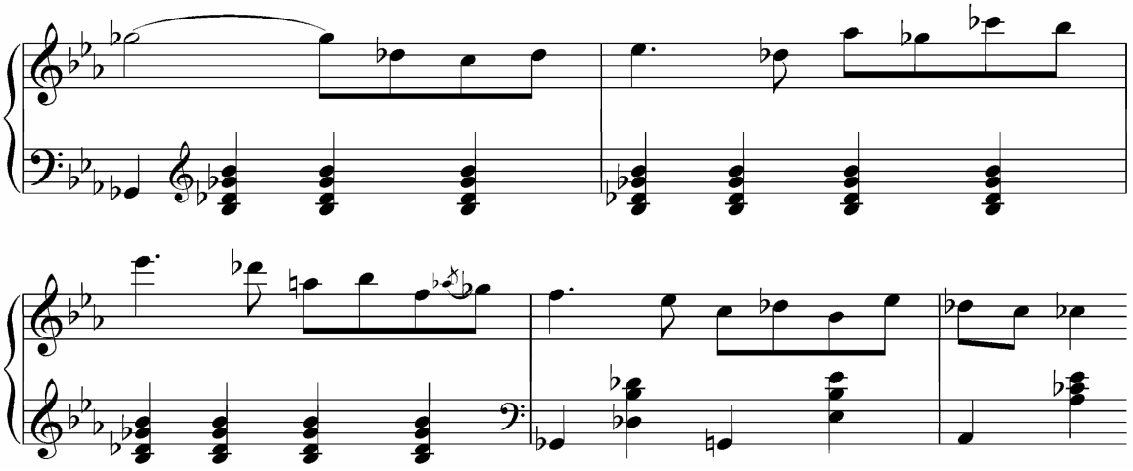
A short reference to the opening soon prepares for the soloist's first entry:

Ex. 43



The piano begins simply enough, but after eight bars there is a sudden flowering into *arabesques* in the right hand. A half-close is reached and, after a pause, the soloist refers again to his opening statement, now *pp*, and this leads to what at first would appear to be the normal preparation for the second subject. However, four modulating bars from strings and solo clarinet produce a new theme which appears only the once:

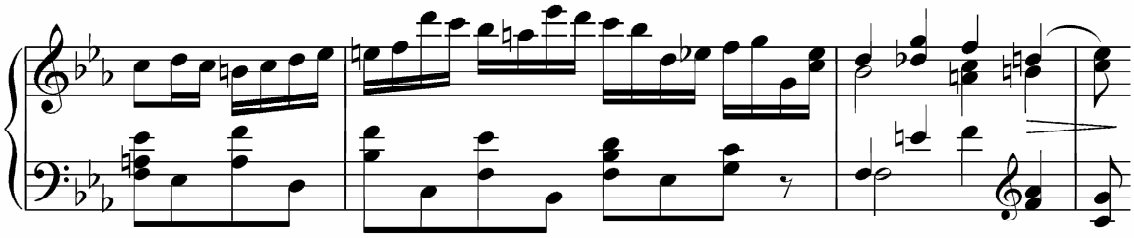
Ex. 44



This additional subject for the piano exhibits Field's use of *cantilena*, as well as a marching bass, which feature becomes more prominent again in the rounding-off of this section. After a full-close in G flat, passage-work from the soloist leads, by means this time of a shorter preparatory dominant pedal, to the second subject proper in B flat. It is announced by the piano, there being only slight differences from the earlier orchestral

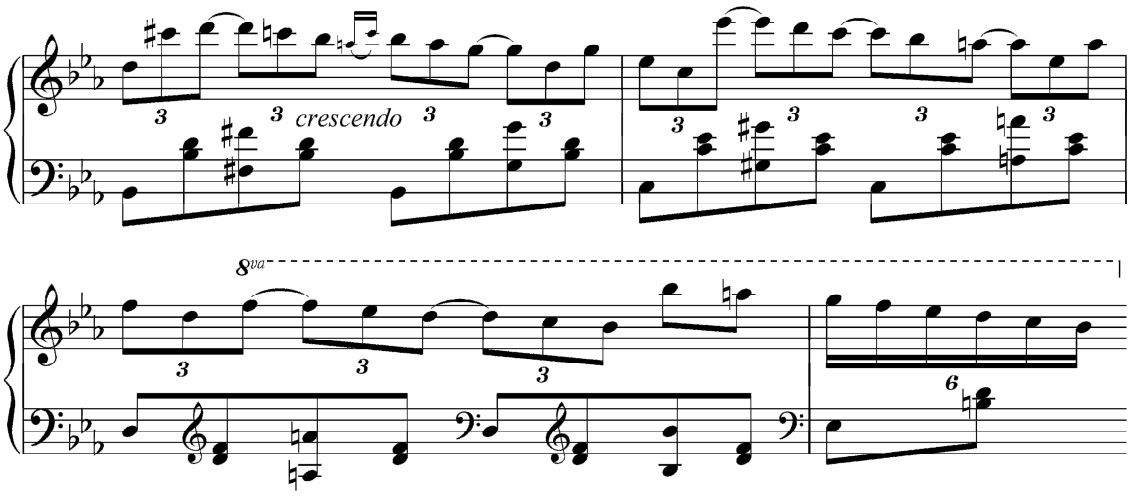
quotation above; strings and, later, wind and timpani are used to highlight some of the piano's phrases. Whilst Field adds some embellishments to the second subject, to give it more variety than it had in the orchestral exposition, its essentially static nature, due to the frequent cadencing in B flat, still lurks very near the surface. When movement does occur, it appears to happen all at once, with the result that this static aspect becomes more noticeable:

Ex. 45



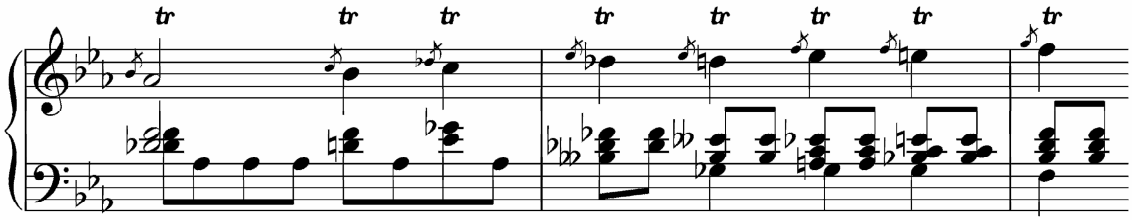
Having dealt with the somewhat harmonically-constricted second subject, Field's inventiveness is now able to roam more freely in the closing sections of the exposition. The first begins with a continuous triplet passage in the upper part of the keyboard, with the left hand, below, maintaining a regular division of the beat; the orchestra, meanwhile, accompanies with low chords on the strings over a *pizzicato* bass and with trills on the woodwind. At the end of this first episode Field makes use of a short modulating passage which moves through a number of keys till it arrives again at the starting one – a sort of chromatic 'round-trip' much used by Chopin, and here particularly reminiscent of the D flat major section from the Waltz in C sharp minor Op. 64 No. 2:

Ex. 46



In accordance with the sectional aspect of Field's style, referred to above, the closing section is based on the passage-work which he used to inject movement into the second subject, and quoted earlier. The approach to the concluding dominant trill, in B flat, begins ordinarily enough, but suddenly veers away, forcing the composer to interpolate a somewhat harmonically-challenged passage to return to the dominant:

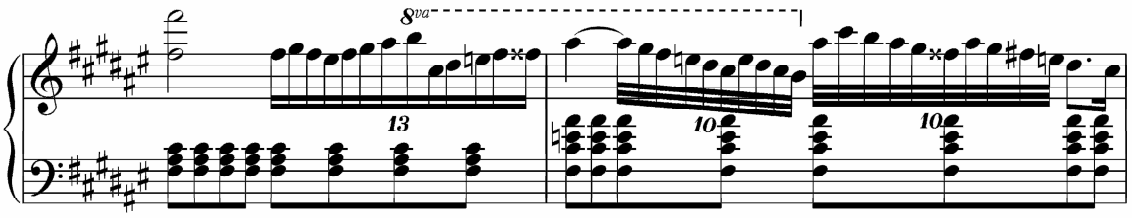
Ex. 47



The closing *tutti* closely resembles the very first main orchestral contribution to this concerto, where the dotted rhythms of the opening are developed against busy unison string scales, now, of course, in the dominant. Again, the dynamics drop to *pp*, as they did prior to the soloist's opening statement, and four modulatory bars from the strings bring the key round, enharmonically, for the piano to begin the development in F sharp

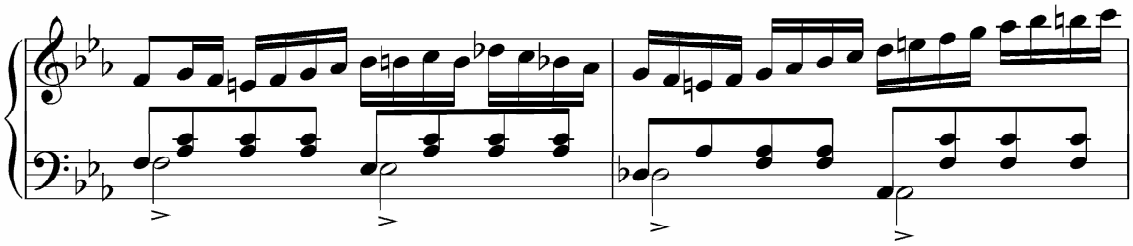
major, with the kind of *arabesque* figures which had appeared earlier in the soloist's version of the first subject:

Ex. 48



A short, and quiet orchestral interlude, based on the first subject, completes the modulation to F minor, where the following material, devised from the piano's additions to the static second subject, now in a more closely-knit version, henceforth provides the main substance of the development:

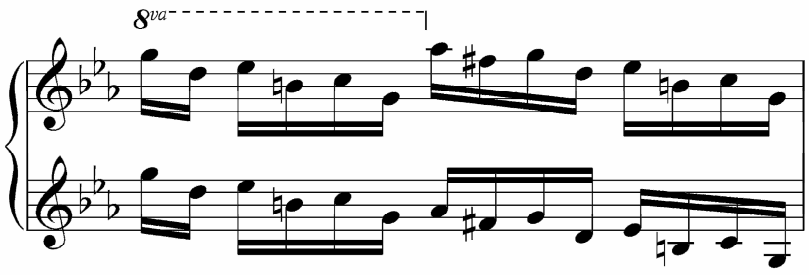
Ex. 49



The right-hand passage-work is soon transferred to the left, whilst the right hand concentrates on the opening dotted rhythms, providing an example of a running-bass, albeit evolved, as mentioned earlier, by transferring from one hand to the other. The key changes to C minor, where a dominant pedal, with continued passage-work from the piano, leads to a statement from the soloist, of the second subject. In the minor key this otherwise harmonically unenterprising theme has more appeal, largely due to the chromatic harmony now at its conclusion. The passage-work, cited above, now resumes

and leads to a *bravura* climax passage from the piano, similar in pattern to that used by Chopin in his F minor Concerto and Mendelssohn in the G minor Concerto:

Ex. 50

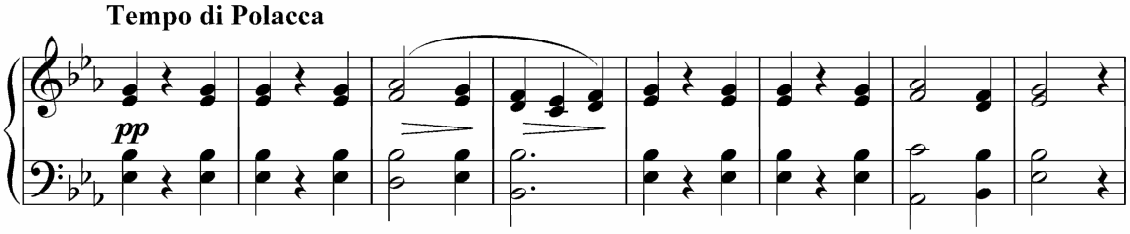


The development is concluded by the orchestra, in similar vein to the opening *tutti*, just before the soloist entered, and the recapitulation then proceeds, at first orchestrally, the melodic-line altered slightly, and then with the piano's statement of the first subject. This follows the exposition practically note-for-note for eighteen bars, when the same half-close and pause are reached. However, instead of a repeat of the opening statement and the ensuing G flat major section earlier, Field launches straight into the piano's version of the second subject and from here it is practically a straightforward transposition of the exposition to the tonic key until the soloist's last note. The final orchestral contribution of eight bars could easily have come from any of Mozart's scores in the same key.

The second movement, marked *Tempo di Polacca* in the score, exists also in a separate, shorter form for piano solo, as the *Polonaise en Rondeau*. The future developments of the polonaise, in the hands of Chopin, must not distort present-day judgement in appraising this seemingly quite different-in-character piece by Field. In the early nineteenth century, the polonaise in Russia was an essential part of the ritual of the court and high society, and it is this aspect of it, rather than its national associations,

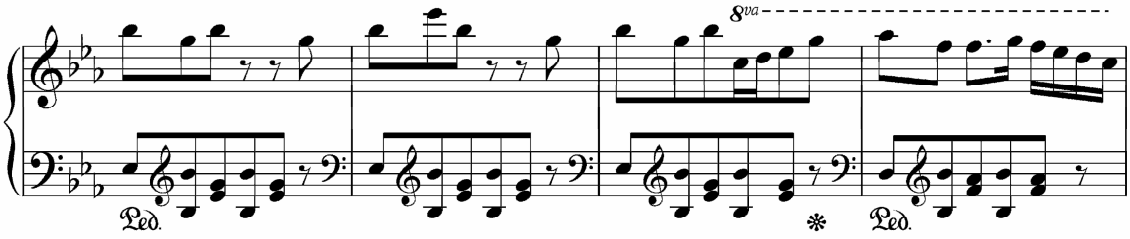
which the composer has expressed in his music; it was a resounding success with the aristocracy at every performance. It begins with a none-too-promising introduction from bassoons, horns, cellos and basses:

Ex. 51



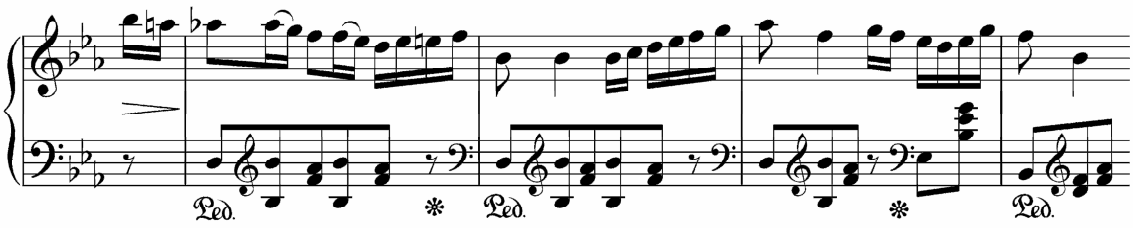
The main theme immediately follows on the piano, accompanied by soft chords from the strings:

Ex. 52



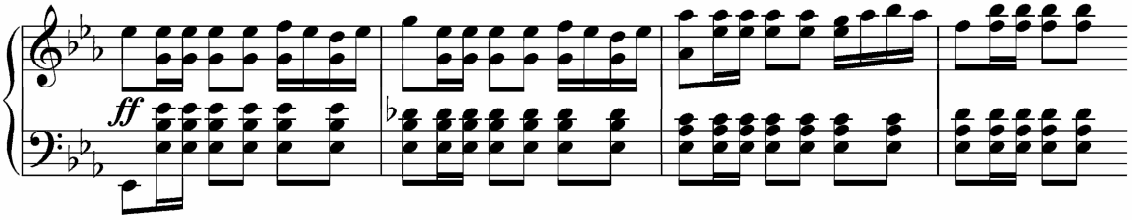
This is repeated by the soloist with semiquaver decoration and a delightful orchestral accompaniment in which the second two quavers of the theme are shared between two contrasting tone colours, *pizzicato* violins and basses with bassoons, and horns and clarinets respectively. The second half of the theme then appears, against a rocking, sustained string accompaniment:

Ex. 53



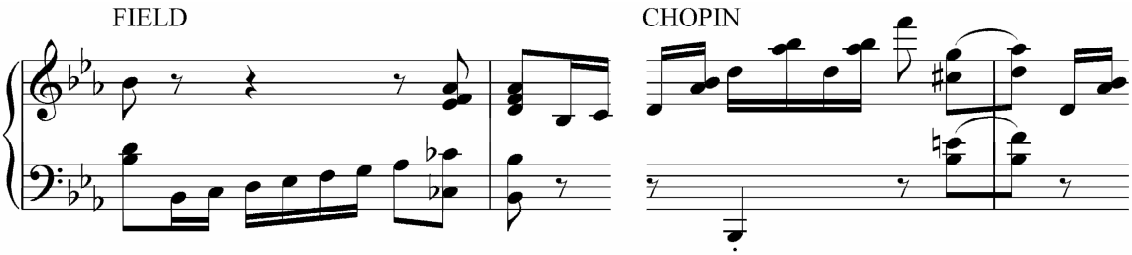
The 'bell' motif mentioned earlier occurs here, at end of phrases and, after a repeat of the second half of the theme, a short orchestral *tutti* ensues, mainly on a tonic pedal, and making use of a common-enough rhythmic figure in this type of composition; it numbers, amongst its precedents, the *Rondo alla Polacca* from Beethoven's Triple Concerto:

Ex. 54



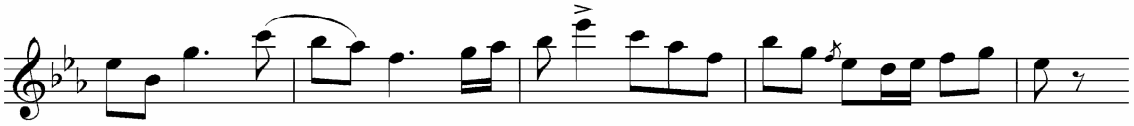
The rondo theme returns, with modified figuration, and melodic direction when Field quotes it in G flat major, beginning at the third bar of the original statement. Prior to returning to the tonic key, the composer makes use of a rhythmic pattern of running semiquavers and paired chords, seen later in Chopin's *Grande Polonaise Brillante*:

Ex. 55



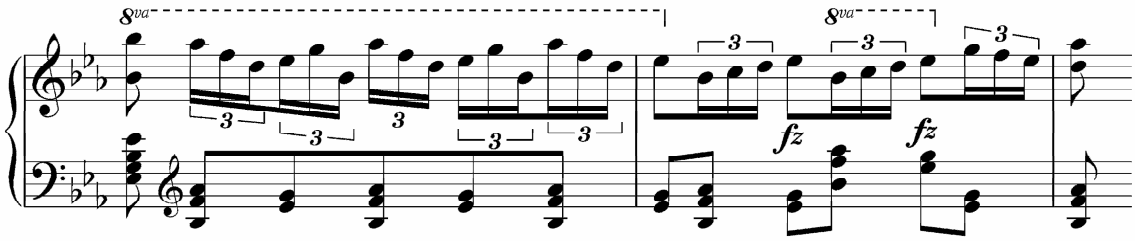
After a further short statement of the rondo theme, an orchestral *tutti*, similar to that recently quoted, follows; it does, however, contain a fresh theme, sung out by first violins over a rocking accompaniment from second violins and viola:

Ex. 56



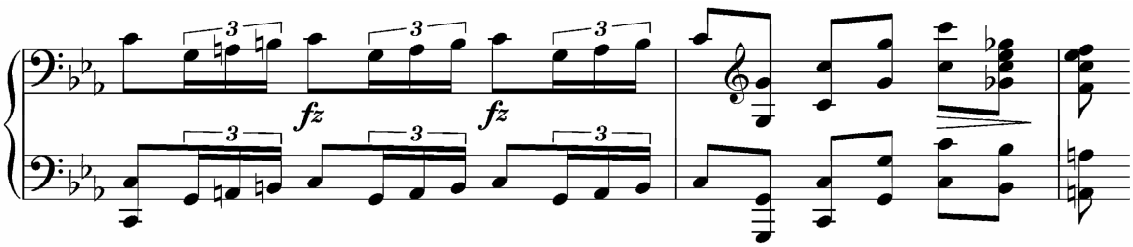
The first section of this movement has been concerned generally with exploring the main theme. In the succeeding section, the composer adds contrast by employing semiquaver motion in triplets:

Ex. 57



After eight bars, a new motif appears, rhythmically to be seen again in the *Alla Polacca* from Chopin's *Là ci darem* Variations and almost note-for-note in the first bar of his *Alla Polacca* from the *Introduction and Polonaise Brillante* for Cello and Piano; in this example, unison strings double the piano's part till the double octaves:

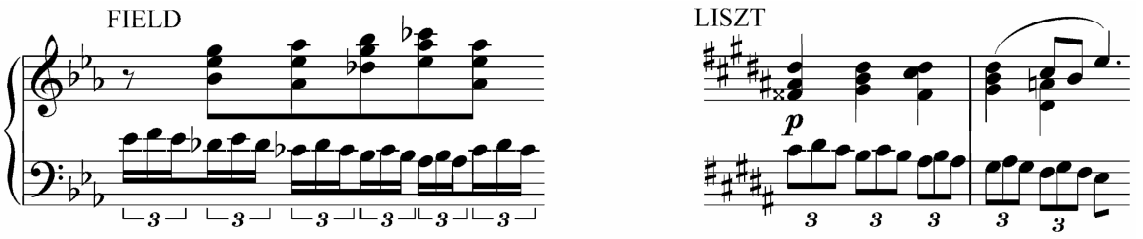
Ex. 58



The triplet passage-work leads to a statement of the rondo theme now in B flat, over a customary tonic pedal, modulates to D minor and returns to B flat again; the triplets resume once more and appear eventually in the upper strings which have, up until now, mainly accompanied the piano-figuration chordally, and often in syncopation with the basses. The passage-work from the soloist at times could also be transferred directly to Chopin's *Grande Polonaise Brillante* in the same key. Much use is made of orchestral pedal points and a sixteen-bar passage, with a left-hand *ostinato* pattern of repeated B flats in octaves from the piano, eventually culminates in a return to the rondo theme in the tonic. This closely resembles the opening statement, accompanied by soft string chords, with some minor melodic adjustments from the soloist. The second statement shows the piano avoiding any excess decoration probably so as not to detract from the effective orchestration; the six quavers are paired two and three, four and five, six and one, and shared now between three distinct orchestral groups – *pizzicato* strings, flutes and oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns respectively, with timpani beats on the first quaver of the bar. The second half of the theme, quoted above, leads to an orchestral *tutti* which commences in the tonic minor, before the earlier violin melody cited, now played by flutes with a brief counterpoint from the bassoons, concludes it in the major mode. The piano immediately effects a return to the tonic minor and proceeds with a version of the rondo theme in this key. This leads, via a section in G flat major based on a tonic

pedal, to further triplet semiquaver passage-work initially in the right hand, but taken over into the left, when it points towards the type of writing in the *Stretta quasi Presto* of Liszt's B minor Sonata:

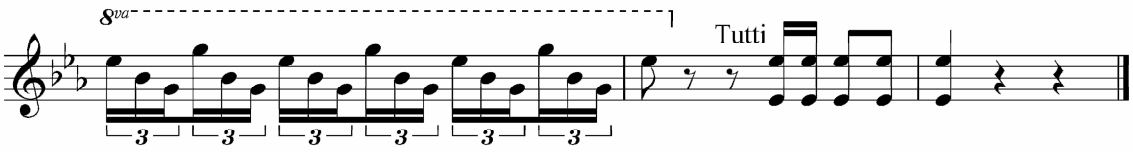
Ex. 59



A declamatory passage of quaver chords from the soloist, followed by six further bars from muted strings, completes the bridge into the new section in C major. Here, a theme based on the introductory rocking rhythm is heard in the strings, with interjections from solo wind instruments, whilst the piano decorates this with delicate passage-work based mainly on arpeggios, and played *una corda*. This slower section, marked *Più Moderato*, may have intentionally been written to compensate for the absence of a slow movement, suggesting that the concerto was played as written, without the interpolation of a *nocturne*, which has been conjectured. The Seventh Concerto similarly has only two movements, and in this case, a slow interlude occurs in the middle of the first movement. Field's method of shifting chords with his right-hand arpeggios over a fairly static bass certainly points towards the first of Chopin's *Études*. Eventually, the approach to the tonic key is made, the soloist's part consisting firstly of 'skipped' rhythms then triplets, before the final statement of the rondo theme appears, supported by rocking quavers in the violins and a tonic/dominant drone in the lower strings. This leads straight into the closing section, where the piano has total dominance, mainly in semiquaver triplet

figuration, and extends over into the closing *tutti*, in which the soloist continues to participate. Field uses the 'bell' motif again in the last bars of the piano part, the orchestra then, after two quaver rests, concludes the movement with the same rhythmic pattern used by Chopin, at the end of the *Bolero*, Op. 19. Interestingly, in the solo *Polonaise*, Field extended this rhythmic pattern by the interpolation of an extra middle bar of three crotchets, as did Chopin in the *Grande Polonaise Brillante*:

Ex. 60



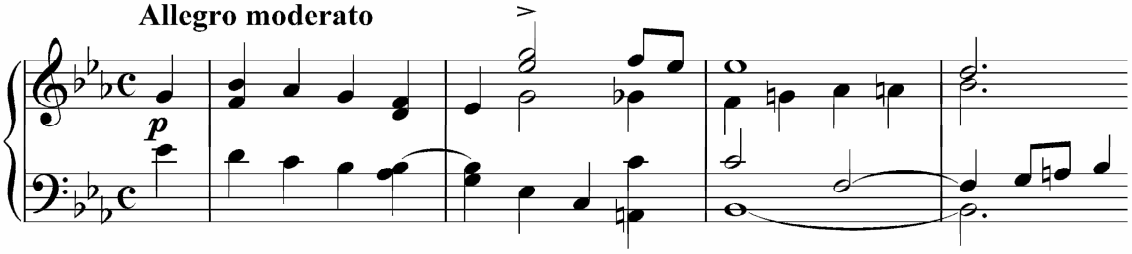
It has been suggested that Field's Third Concerto is possibly his second in order of composition; the use of the two-movement form, the relatively unsophisticated texture of some of the piano-writing (in the rondo, particularly), the more restricted harmonic range, certain aspects of orchestration such as the less-developed use of the wind-band or the almost total doubling of the cello/bass line, all these facts could substantiate this suggestion. It may well be, therefore, that the concerto which Clementi saw, during his visit to St Petersburg of 1806, was the work here discussed. Whilst its dedication to him does not necessarily prove anything, it could be seen as the outcome of the temporary reunion of master and pupil after the first parting of their ways in 1802.

CONCERTO NO. 4 IN E FLAT MAJOR

The Fourth Concerto, again in E flat, is scored for a slightly smaller orchestra than its predecessor: one flute, clarinets, bassoons, trumpets and horns all in pairs, timpani in

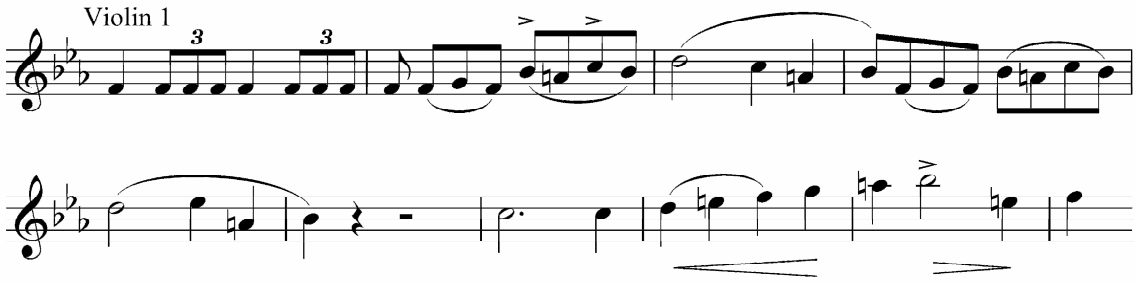
E flat and B flat, and the usual string complement are the required resources. The first subject, announced quietly by the strings only (without double basses), looks back to the same soft, singing style of the opening of the Second Concerto:

Ex. 61



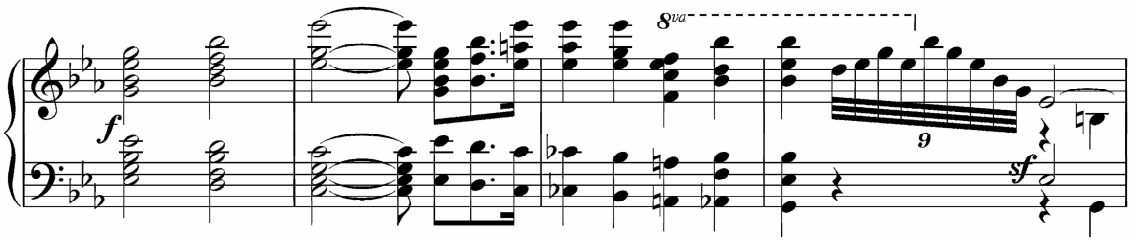
After some fifteen bars, the full orchestral resources are employed in a modulatory passage built on the syncopated rhythm of the second bar of the first subject, and in which military-sounding triplets lead into the once-more suave second subject:

Ex. 62



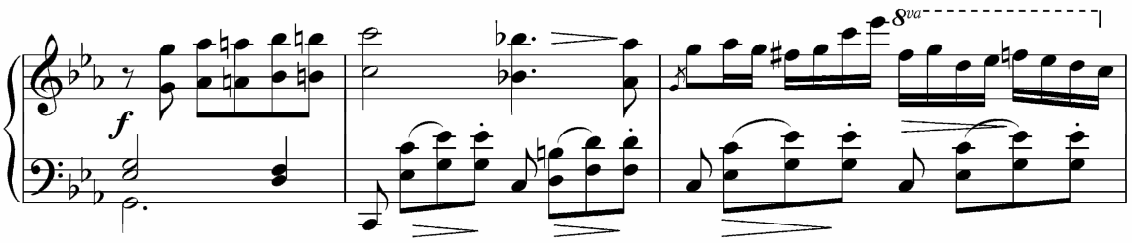
A briefest of excursions into D flat then ensues, before the martial rhythms culminate in a short, violent outburst in the tonic minor, after which a ten-bar dominant pedal leads to a restatement of the first subject, now with basses playing, and with some highlighting from woodwind and horns in the closing bars. The soloist's grandiose chordal entry abruptly disturbs the calm of these last few bars:

Ex. 63



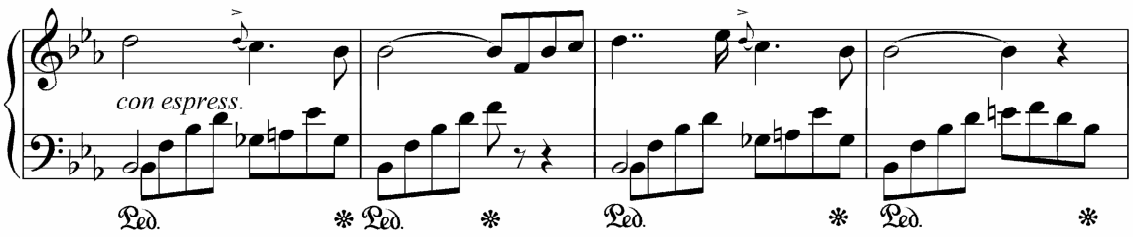
The closing half of the soloist's first statement typically consists of lyrical embellishments over left-hand triplets, supported by sustained strings. The *arabesque* at the end of the piano's declamatory opening then proves to be fertile in providing material for a number of bars, before the soloist introduces a new theme:

Ex. 64



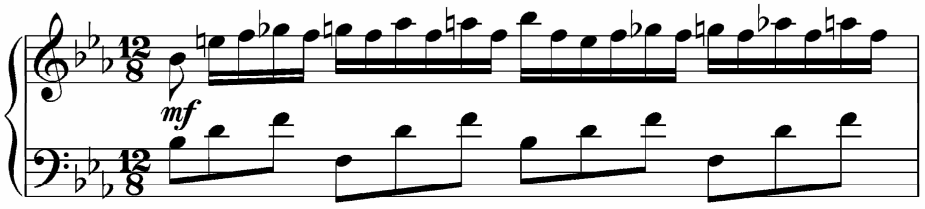
This 'new' theme, however, is, in fact, an anticipatory glance at the treatment the second subject will receive subsequently from the piano. Passage-work from the soloist, supported mainly by the strings with occasional assistance from woodwind and first horn, leads to the second subject, rather conventionally orchestrated, with the piano giving out the theme over a sustained chordal accompaniment from the upper strings, movement being injected by the *pizzicato* bass-line. However, as if by way of compensation, Field subtly alters both the melodic-line and its accompanying harmonies:

Ex. 65



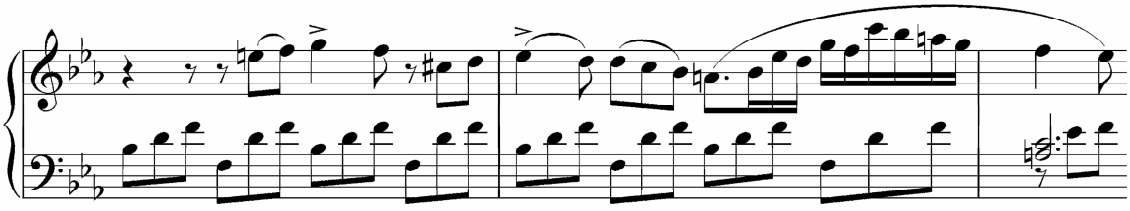
The second subject is worked out largely as it was in the orchestral exposition, except, of course, for the more embellished melodic-line from the piano, and a further varied repeat after the brief detour to D flat. If the way in which Field treats the second subject would seem somewhat cursory, the ensuing closing section certainly contains more than enough ideas to redress any imbalance. The soloist launches into the closing section with figuration, based on a triplet subdivision of the main pulse:

Ex. 66



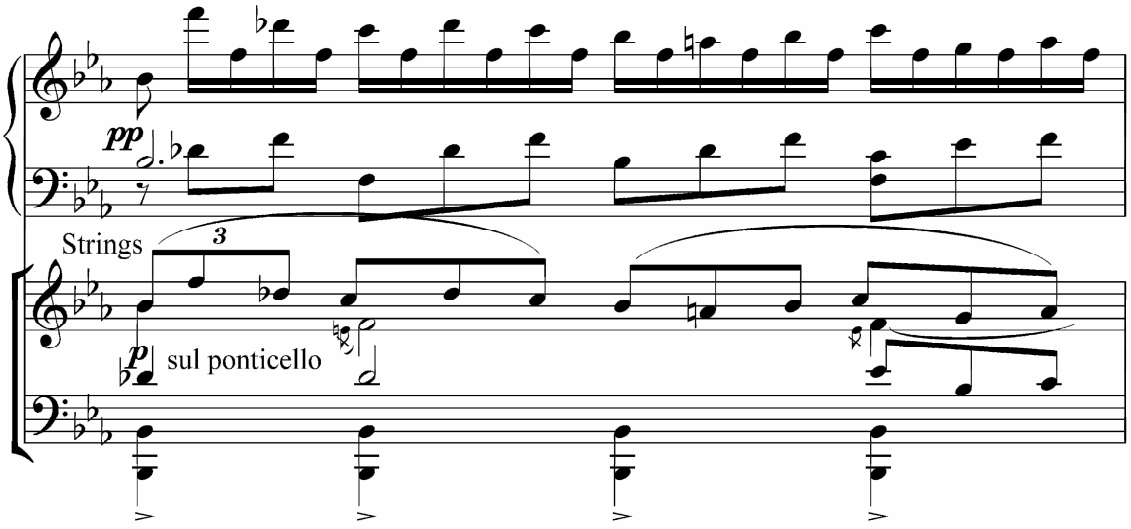
At this stage the orchestral accompaniment is restricted to strings with a minimum of help from woodwind and horns, and the soloist's passage-work, whilst delicately ornate, is not strikingly original, nor harmonically very enterprising. Far more characteristic is the ensuing section from the piano, with strings accompanying:

Ex. 67



The key turns to B flat minor, where the composer introduces a short section in which the entire string orchestra is required to play *sul ponticello*, while the soloist's right hand reflects the violin line in a higher octave:

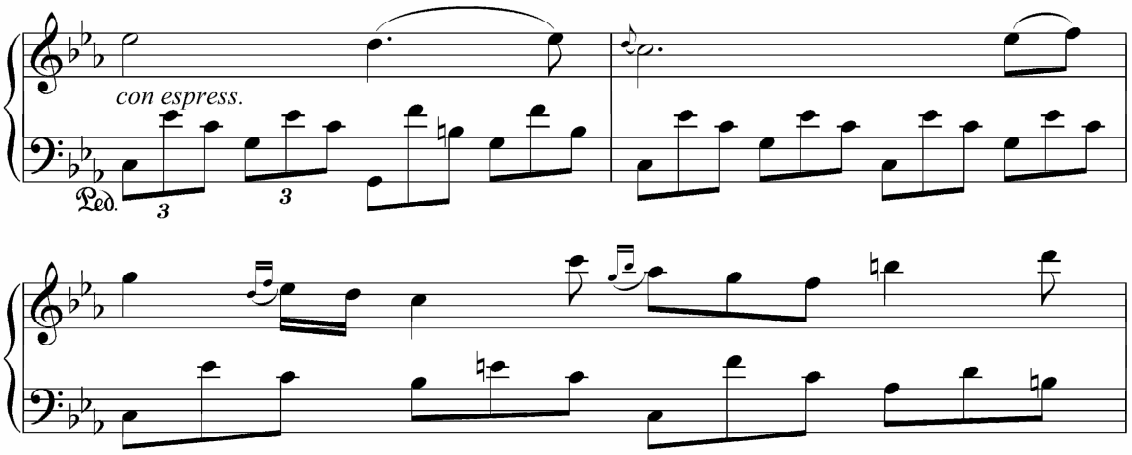
Ex. 68



As a whole, the orchestration of the first movement is effective in its economic use of resources, but mostly predictable. The scoring of the passage just quoted indicates an interest in exotic orchestral colouring which is rare in the concert music of Field's time. At the conclusion of this interesting passage, the soloist then embarks on an almost continuous stream of semiquavers, punctuated mainly by chords in the left hand, eventually to arrive at the closing orchestral *tutti*. It is interesting to observe Field's use of the alto clef in the piano's left-hand part for just over a bar, in order to avoid excessive leger lines. Also, absent is the customary concluding trill which has marked the soloist's fina1 contribution to the exposition in earlier works. At the start of this *tutti*, the full orchestral resources are used for the first time since the opening, but in the space of a few

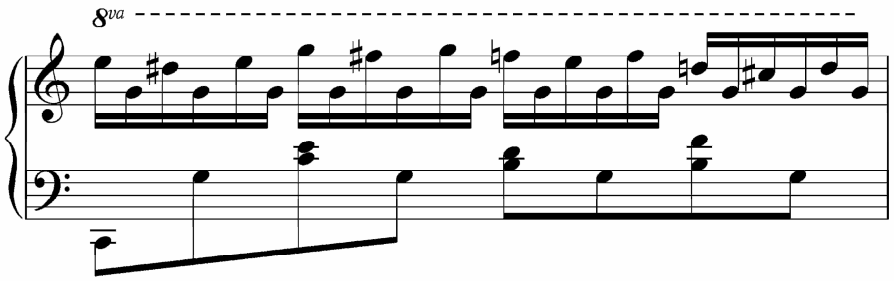
bars, dynamics are brought right down as strings, only, prepare for the soloist's next entry in C minor, at the start of the development:

Ex. 69



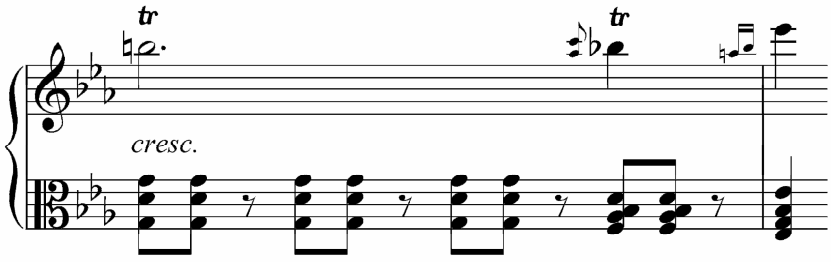
Field most effectively scores this *nocturne*-like episode with sustained strings echoing the soloist's line, as well as adding melodic counterpoint on occasions from first and second violins an octave apart. Solo woodwind instruments enhance the already delicate and effective string-writing. After this section comes to rest in A flat, the soloist embarks once more on the type of passage-work which featured prominently towards the end of the exposition, while the orchestral accompaniment is largely confined to single crotchet interjections. Although the passage-work is mainly reserved for the soloist's right hand, on occasions the left hand gives up its chordal accompanying role briefly to participate in double counterpoint with the right. A rather charming and effectively-written episode in C major, based again on the second subject, follows, making good use both of a tonic (cellos/basses) and a dominant (first horn) pedal:

Ex. 70



Field again effectively scores his accompaniment using woodwind and first horn in sustained lines, with impetus from the *pizzicato* cellos and basses. The key changes to C minor, where a five-bar dominant pedal in this key, complete with cadential trill from the soloist would appear to be ushering in a *tutti* to effect a suitable modulatory bridge for the recapitulation to begin. Field, however, makes a far-from-satisfactory join by deciding to jump straight back into the tonic, thus creating one of those rather uncomfortable shifts of key which sometimes flaw his inspiration. Again, the alto clef is used for the soloist's left hand:

Ex. 71

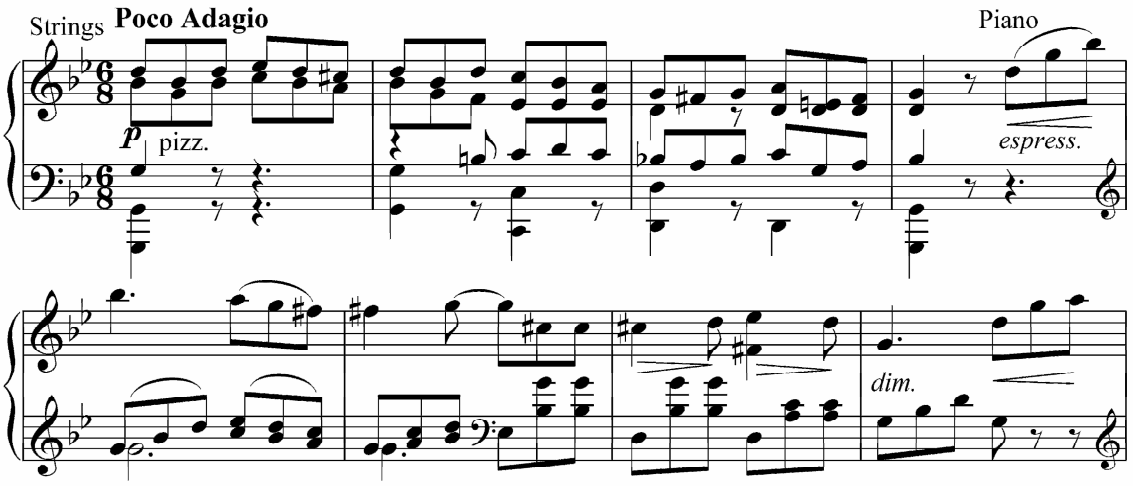


The short orchestral *tutti*, which makes reference only to the second half of the first subject, leads straight to the solo version which resembles, except for some thickening and thinning out of the texture, the piano's opening statement. Figuration derived from the *arabesque* of the piano's fourth bar propels the movement on, as before, but at this juncture the recapitulation is made same twenty-three bars shorter than in the exposition,

rather abruptly leading to the second subject. This represents largely a transposition of the recapitulation, though with sufficient variety to avoid being a mere copy. The closing section of the movement is interesting in that Field reverses the two basic ideas quoted in the exposition; the *cantabile* theme appears first, and leads to the more convoluted figuration which originally appeared at the time-change after the second subject. The *sul ponticello* section re-occurs in the tonic, although strings are now asked to play normally, the woodwind and horn parts are fuller, and effective use is made of timpani rolls marked *ppp*. The relentless right-hand passage-work is rarely relieved by the left hand as the movement races to its conclusion, but the piano-writing is effective enough to mask the harmonic clichés on which it is built. The concluding trill is again absent and the movement is rounded off by nine bars of orchestral *tutti* in which a martial air of trumpets and drums prevails.

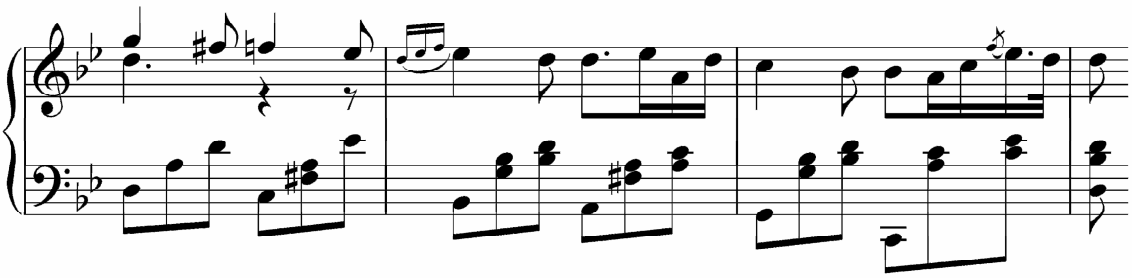
The slow movement is described by the composer as a *Siciliano*, although marked *Poco Adagio* which is somewhat slower than more typical examples. Gentle and plaintive, and somewhat Mendelssohn-like in character, it is scored for strings only, and alternates short phrases for plucked strings with the separated phrases of a sensitive *cantilena* for the soloist; Field made a successful transcription for piano solo. *Pizzicato* strings open the movement and the soloist soon enters:

Ex. 72



The piano's first phrase ends in B flat major, at which point strings enter again in a delightfully-scored section where the soft quality of violas, now *arco*, is heard below the *pizzicato* violins and the soloist, who follows their line in his high register. A further, brief sentence from the piano, with strings added at the cadence, concludes the middle section. The soloist then embellishes his opening phrase with characteristic figures and grace-notes, before reaching the tonic key with an effective section making good use of silences and pairs of chords. A new episode, in E flat major, is introduced by the piano, and this again concludes with a telling use of silence. The soloist leads back into the tonic key, with some very poignant writing:

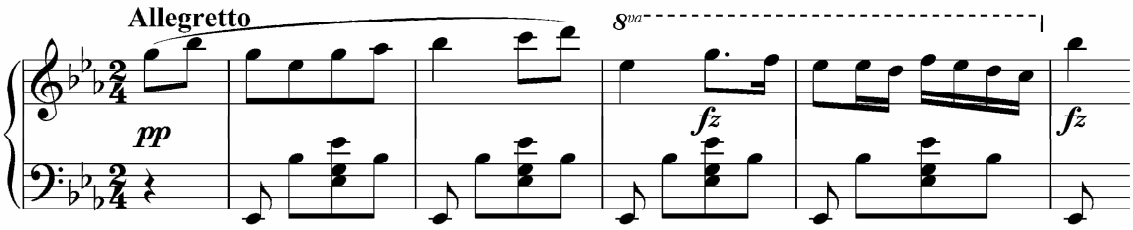
Ex. 73



Strings, now *arco*, gently bring this little gem of a movement to a close with a *tierce de Picardie*, and the instruction, *Attacca subito il Rondo*.

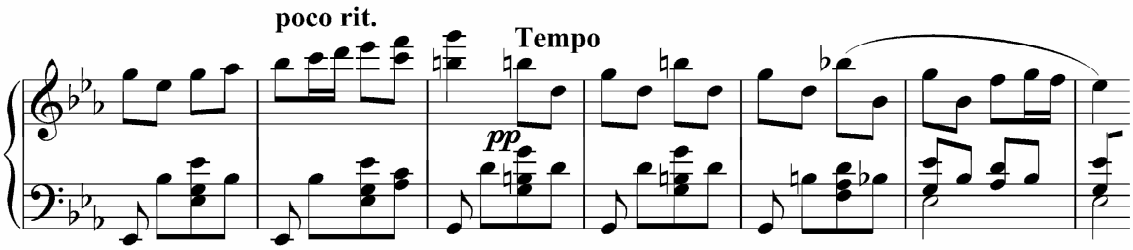
The *pianissimo* opening of the rondo follows immediately after the nostalgic *Siciliano*, and is again in one of Field's light-hearted moods. The soloist announces the main theme ever a tonic-dominant drone from the strings, similar to the First Concerto:

Ex. 74



The pedal-point only superficially resembles the earlier usage, for the composer has some surprises in store in this movement. After twelve bars where the tonic has reigned supreme, Field deftly slips in and out of G major: a successful piece of musical side-stepping, which is varied on subsequent returns of the theme:

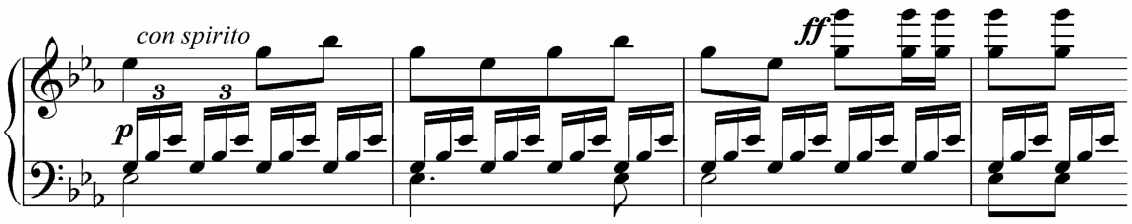
Ex. 75



Before the first *tutti* is reached, the theme is embellished on its repeats with semiquaver figuration, and there is a conspicuous use of *rubato* and pauses. The *tutti* evolves from the piano's main theme, here given full martial treatment from wind and timpani, whilst

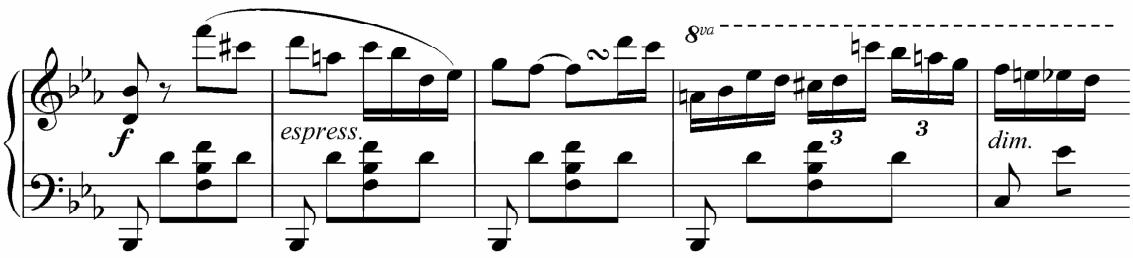
strings develop somewhat the quaver/two semiquavers rhythm of the rondo theme. The piano then resumes its control, with the main theme still in the right hand, over a strumming left:

Ex. 76



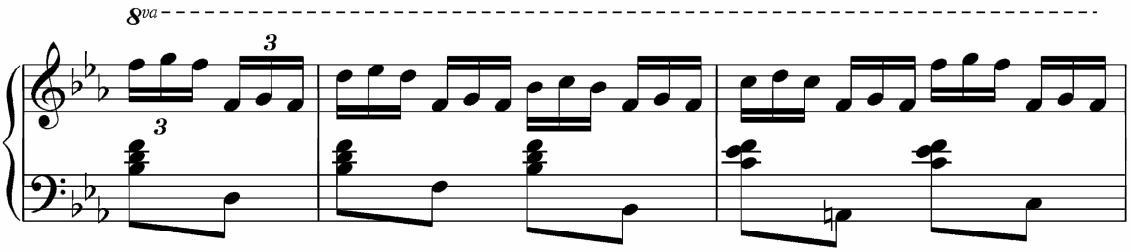
During this modulatory section, the left-hand pattern is maintained in all but the last two bars before the first episode, and it is indeed true to say that the demands made on the player's left hand are, in this movement, unusually testing. The soloist, unaided, introduces the first episode, in the dominant:

Ex. 77



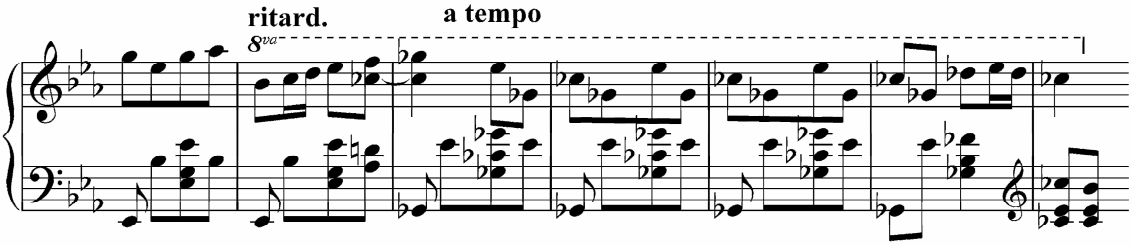
Field's orchestral writing in the early part of this episode shows considerable skill in the telling use of solo woodwind instruments to enhance the string accompaniment, with its alternate sections in which the players change from *arco* to *pizzicato* frequently enough, but with great effect. After a close in B flat, the soloist embarks on a long series of triplet figures, against a conventional string background with *pizzicato* basses, and individual phrases from solo woodwind which will culminate in a return of the rondo theme:

Ex. 78



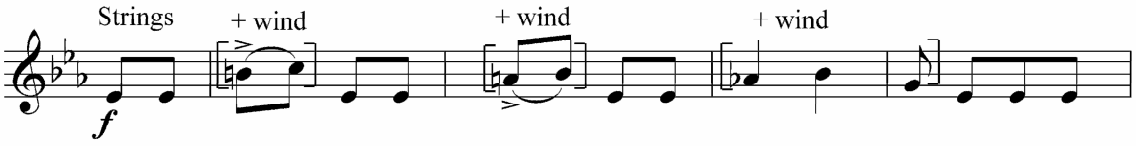
In the final preparation for the rondo theme's return, the right hand makes thematic allusions to it, whilst the left hand supports firstly with *Alberti*-type figuration and later with semiquaver octave *tremolos* reminiscent of Beethoven's 'Pathétique' sonata. It is interesting that Field approaches the return of the rondo from the same key as that to which he side-stepped in the opening – namely G major – before the re-affirmation of the tonic key is established. The orchestral resources are here differently deployed, the drone confined to cellos/basses, whilst first violins and violas, at an octave's distance, repeat the soloist's first four notes as an *ostinato*. At the point where the original side-step occurred, Field substitutes a fresh modulation:

Ex. 79



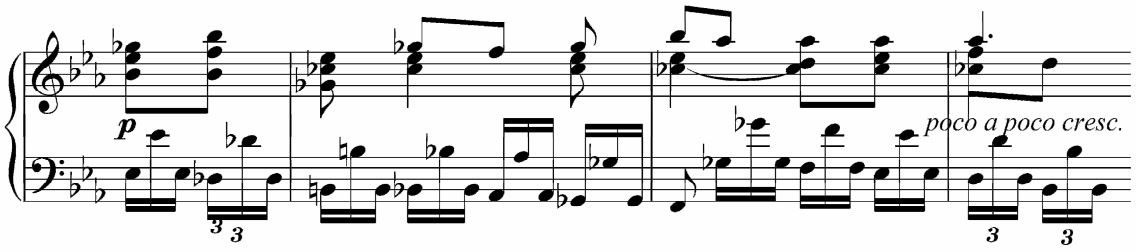
This closing *tutti* resembles, in some ways, the previous one, although gone is the martial version of the rondo theme, the strings now beginning with their earlier material, assisted by wind and timpani:

Ex. 80



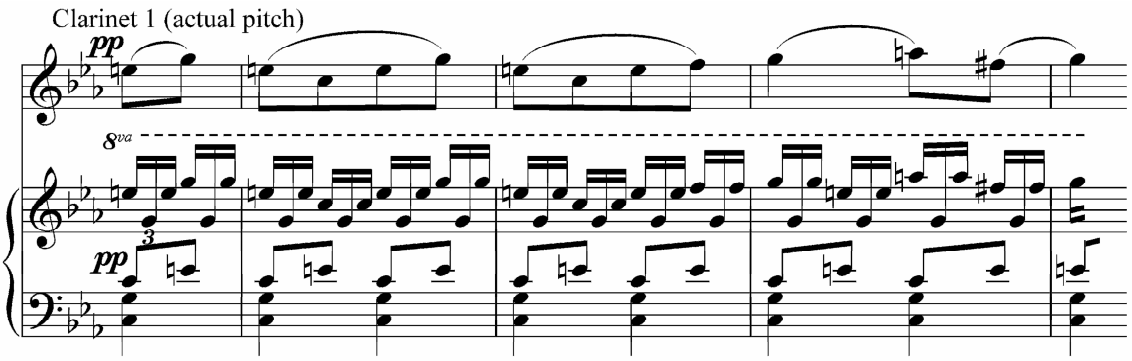
The *tutti* is brought to a *pianissimo* conclusion by the strings, and the soloist enters immediately, now in the tonic minor, with a new theme, announced solo for some twenty-three bars (except for two *sforzando* string chords):

Ex. 81



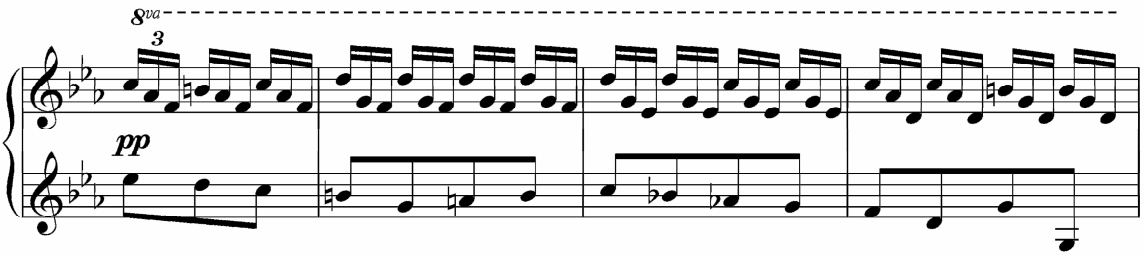
It has already been noted that the demands made on the player's left hand are, in this movement, unusually severe – perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the present episode. A cadence in the tonic minor is reached, and this point signifies a reversal of roles for the pianist's two hands, in a further section where the soloist is assigned passage-work while the string section refers to the piano's earlier material of this episode, effecting a modulation to C major. At this juncture, Field introduces a short passage of obvious rustic association: over a bare-fifth drone from cellos and violas, a solo clarinet sings a melody of folk-like quality, derived from the rondo's main theme, which is decorated in triplets by the piano's right hand:

Ex. 82



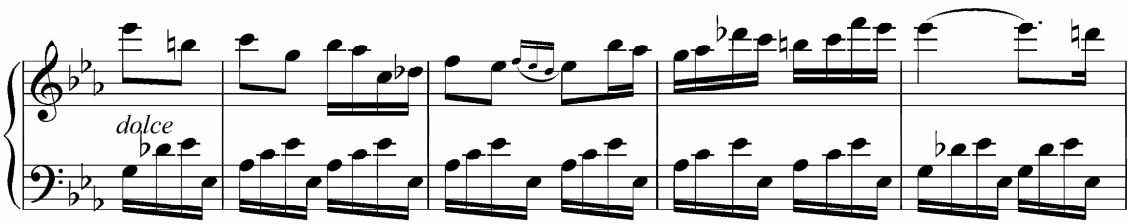
The tonic/dominant pedal persists for almost twenty bars, and the composer effectively orchestrates this little pastoral scene with short countermelodies from the bassoons, whilst relying on the added resonance of the two lowest strings of the violas and cellos respectively, with the basses silent. During the last four bars, the dynamics subside, and the clarinet and piano, over a sustained string chord, bring this delightful little section to a close in C minor. Almost without delay, the earlier left-hand triplet pattern of the soloist resumes, copied by the upper strings, against sustained wind chords, and a climax is quickly reached, only to be curtailed abruptly by a half-close in C minor. After a brief pause, the soloist embarks unaided, except far a short reinforcement of the melodic-line by the clarinets, on a section of passage-work in semiquaver triplets in the right hand, which decorates the sustained melody given out by the left:

Ex. 83



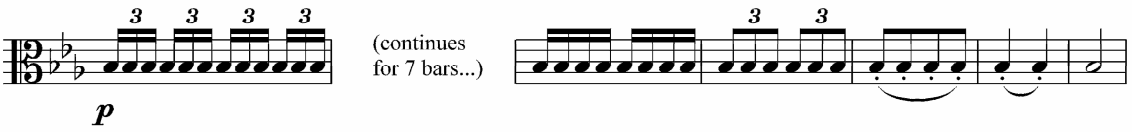
This culminates in a further episode, in A flat, announced by the piano with the now-familiar string support, sustained chords with a *pizzicato* bass-line to add momentum, although Field uses his two horns to intone the dominant at every half-bar, to give further variety to the orchestral texture:

Ex. 84



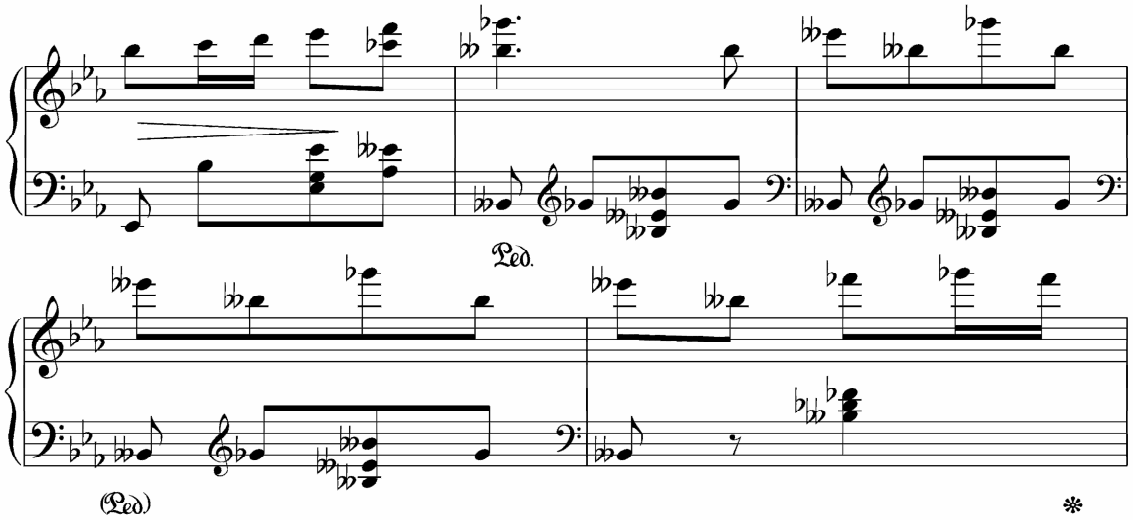
Very soon, however, triplet passage-work is resumed by the piano's right hand, as the return of the rondo theme is prepared for by a dominant pedal, thirty-four bars in length. Field successfully varies the figuration not only in the solo part, but also in his orchestral writing, as well as not confining the pedal to the bass-line exclusively, thereby obviating any tendency towards monotony of texture. A particularly note-worthy effect is achieved in the final bars which lead into the reappearance of the rondo theme: after busy passage-work, the soloist reverts to a simple melodic-line in quavers, in both hands, and the viola part has a built-in *ritardando* effect which finely complements the easing-back of the tempo, just prior to the rondo theme's return:

Ex. 85



The piano announces the rondo theme solo, except for some slight assistance from the horns, until the point at which a key side-step was made earlier. Here, Field again has fresh surprises in store:

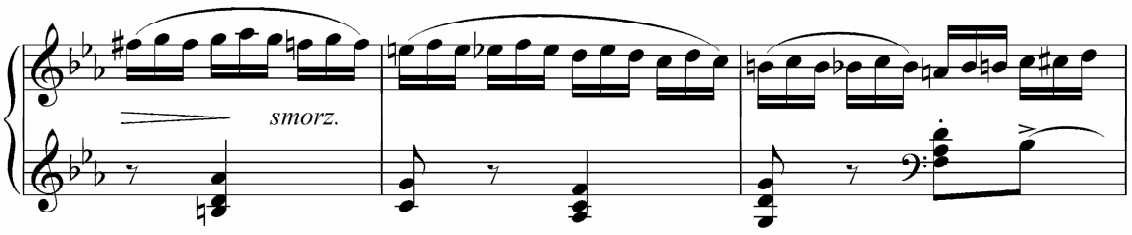
Ex. 86



It did not seem necessary to alter, temporarily, the key signature, thus avoiding the excessive use of double flats, even though the strings, which enter at this juncture, are written for, enharmonically in the key of D major. Field has already been seen to indulge in the conflict of what might be correct grammatically, as opposed to the less-involved enharmonic notation; his solution is usually to confine the correct notation to the soloist, whilst simplifying the reading for the orchestral players. After this brief digression into the wild regions of E double flat, the composer lights upon a particularly felicitous piece of scoring; a final statement of the rondo theme is given to woodwind and horns, while the soloist once more indulges in right-hand triplet figuration in the high register of the instrument. A half-close, followed by a pause, signifies the start of the closing section in which the passage-work is shared fairly equally between the player's two hands whilst

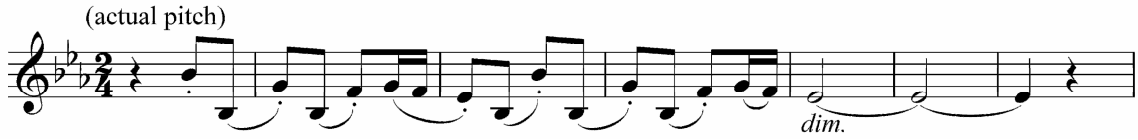
the strings make brief, but telling allusions to the rondo theme. On many occasions, the passage-work is again strongly reminiscent of Chopin:

Ex. 87



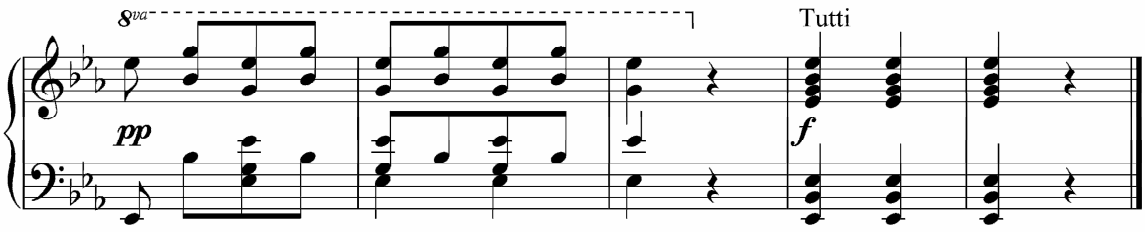
Over a final tonic/dominant pedal, which the soloist embellishes with passage-work, a closing idea is effectively given out by solo first clarinet and horn, an octave apart:

Ex. 88



Field's 'bell' motif appears again at the end of the soloist's part, and the concerto is rounded-off by three strong E flat chords:

Ex. 89



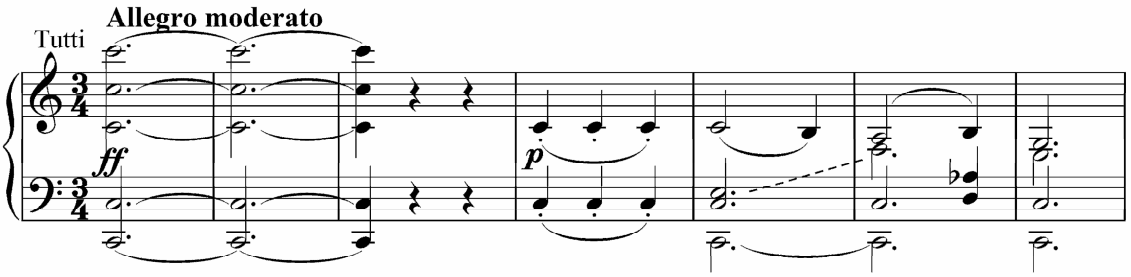
Throughout this last movement particularly, in addition to the often lively orchestration and brilliant piano-writing, a vein of humour which was an important facet of Field's musical personality, and which he himself once described as 'Arlequinage',

can be observed. That the composer knew this concerto to be among his best works is indicated by the choice of it for his reappearance in London, in 1832, though on that occasion he appears to have substituted another piece for the *Siciliano* movement.

CONCERTO NO. 5 IN C MAJOR – *L'INCENDIE PAR L'ORAGE*

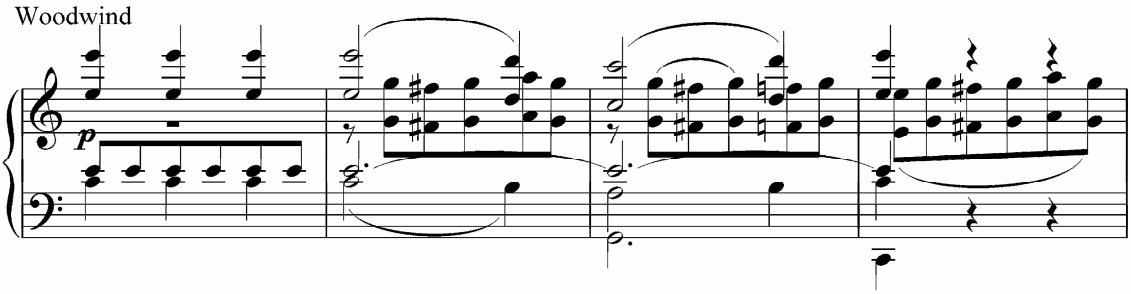
Whilst Field's Fifth Concerto no longer commands the respect it once did, nevertheless it is still a remarkably interesting specimen. This is the concerto in which he out-pointed his rival, Steibelt, by introducing into his first movement a more brilliant and exciting (and in fact a much louder) musical evocation of a storm than that which the Prussian composer included in his Third Concerto. The title, *L'Incendie par l'Orage*, implies that Field was trying to suggest not merely a storm, but some kind of catastrophe resulting from it; whether this alluded merely to a fire caused by lightning or to some larger happening, such as the burning of Moscow, some few years earlier, is now a matter for conjecture, though there is, unfortunately, no evidence available to settle the exact implication. The concerto is scored for the same forces as the Second and Fourth Concertos (i.e. clarinets in lieu of oboes), with the addition of a bass trombone and some extra percussion, which will be discussed more fully in the 'Storm' episode. The opening *tutti* reveals a close relationship between the first subject, announced by the strings after an initial call to attention:

Ex. 90



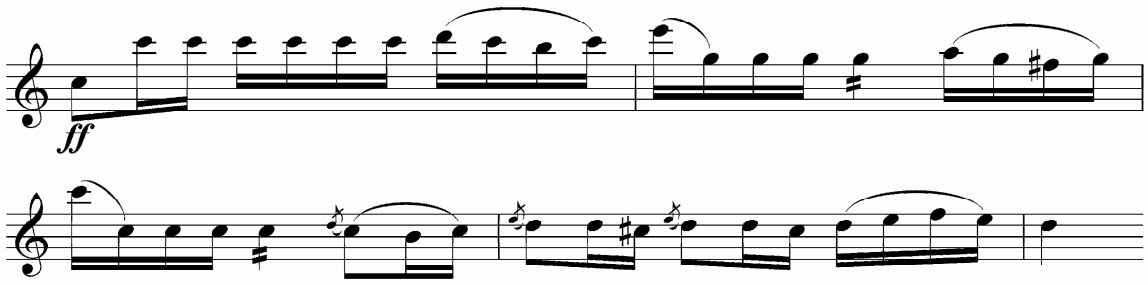
and the second subject, allotted to the woodwind, and presented conventionally in the tonic key:

Ex.91



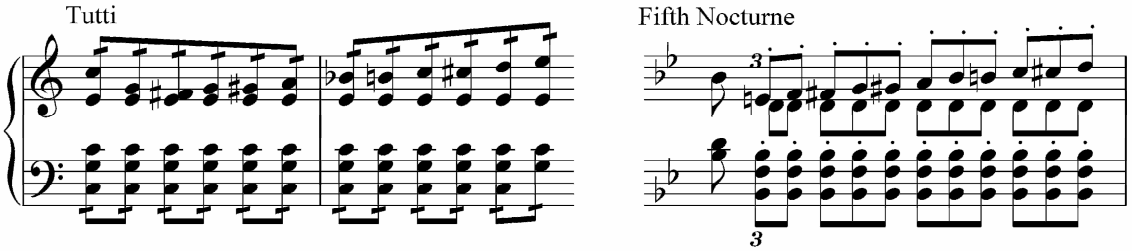
These two themes are linked by a *Polonaise*-like bridge-passage, rather in the Rossini manner, and which is to have an important part to play in all the later orchestral passages:

Ex. 92



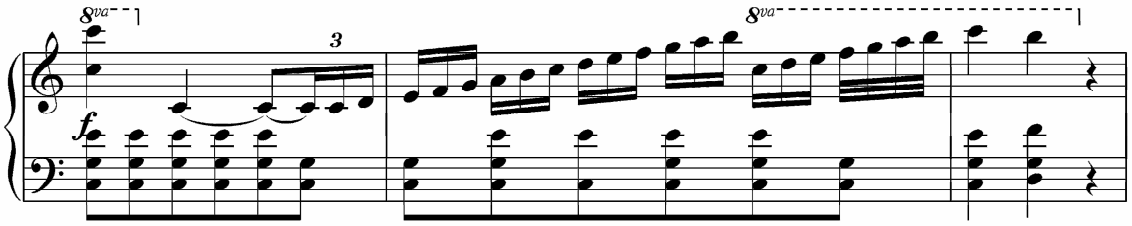
The *tutti* ends with a *codetta* which is almost identical with that of the Fifth *Nocturne*, with which this concerto is roughly contemporary:

Ex. 93



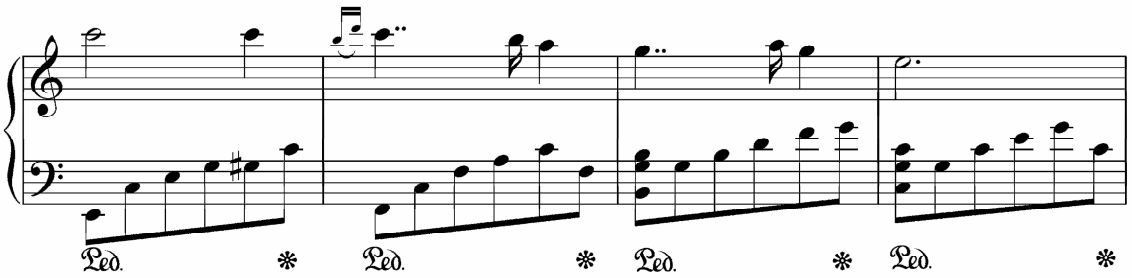
The solo part of this movement bears the look of Chopin on the page more strikingly than any of Field's concerto movements so far; it is brilliant and difficult, containing a number of technical *tours de force* not to be found elsewhere in Field's work, and which will be discussed later, in the section devoted to his piano-writing. The piano's entry is a terse declamatory statement:

Ex. 94



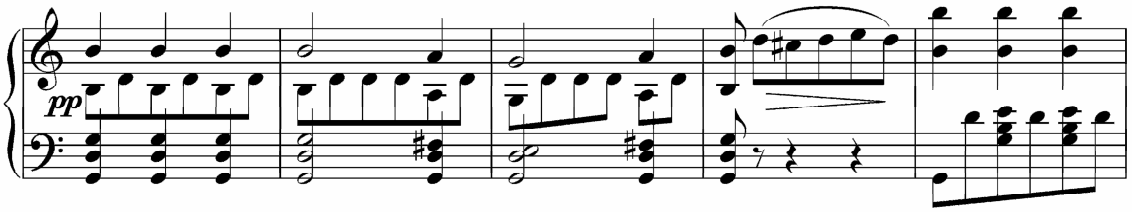
which soon leads to a characteristically languorous mood:

Ex. 95



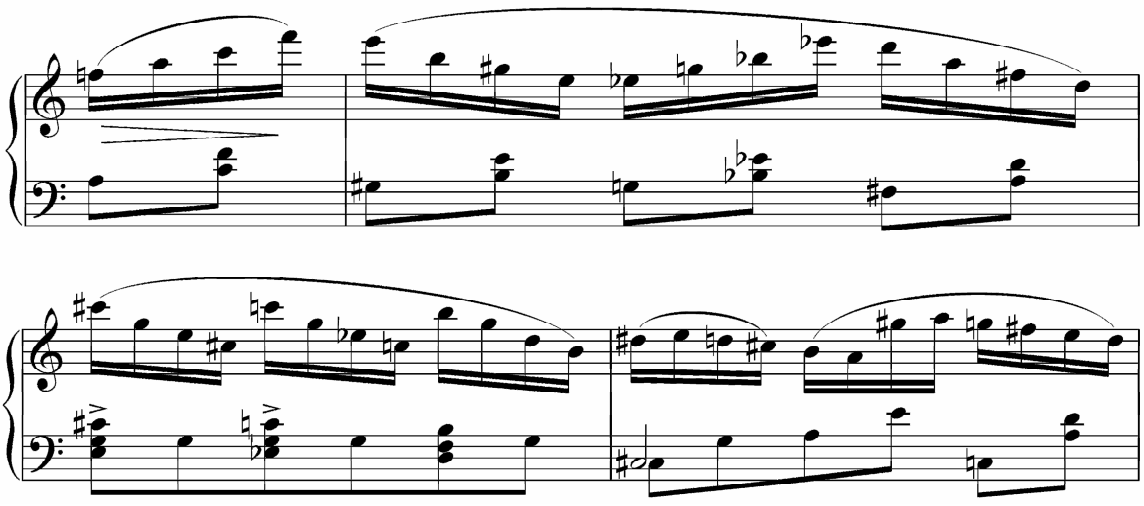
Field effectively scores this short passage with *pizzicato* cellos on the first beat of the bar, while violas sustain the inner melody of the left hand of the solo part. Some very successful, and particularly attractive display passages from the soloist lead eventually to the piano's statement of the second subject, in the text-book key of the dominant:

Ex. 96



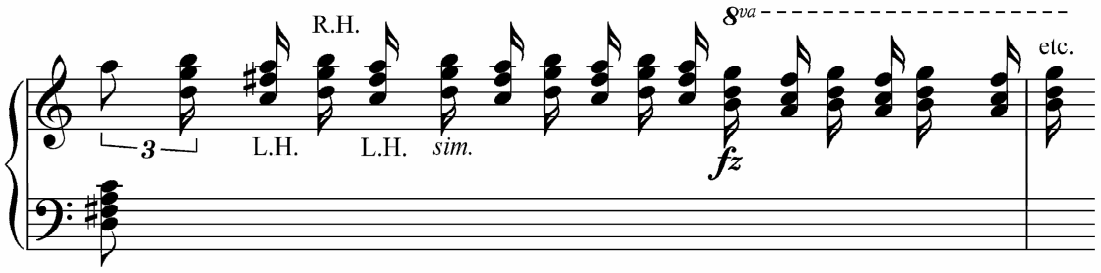
Passage-work, initially in semiquavers and later in triplets, returns to the solo part; often, with its convoluted and chromatic patterns, it hints strongly at the kind of writing which Chopin developed:

Ex. 97



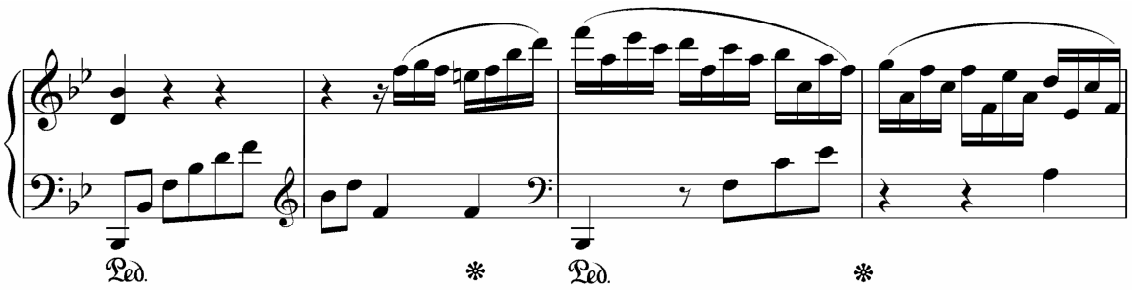
The exposition closes with a trill in chords – an enlargement, by Field, of the traditional device of closing the main sections of concerto movements with a trill:

Ex. 98



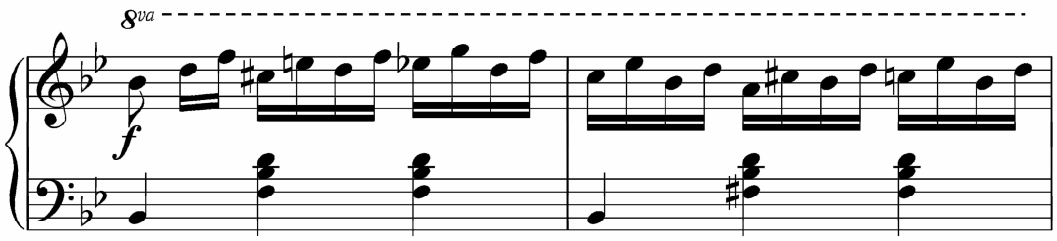
A conventional *tutti*, based on the earlier *Polonaise*-type bridge-passage, rounds-off the exposition, before a quiet string statement of the second subject leads to the piano's declamatory opening of the development section, the key having now changed to B flat major. Very soon, however, a more lyrical mood returns:

Ex. 99



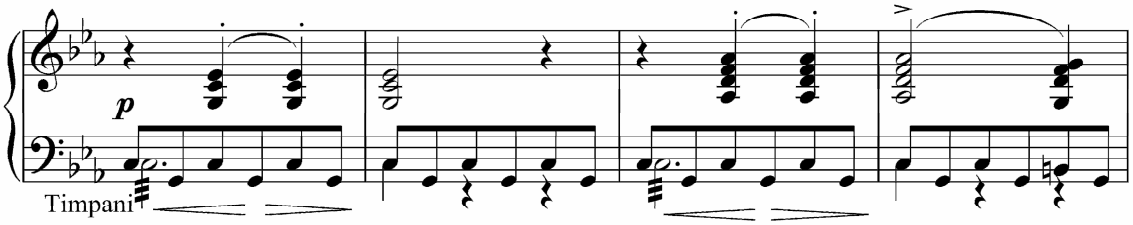
At the fifty-fourth bar of the development, with a change into C minor, *L'Orage* begins. Most of these intervening bars, following the previous quotation, are taken up with a pattern of running semiquavers which suggest a strongly blowing wind, as they approach via B flat minor and F minor, the start of the storm:

Ex. 100



Strings announce the opening theme of the storm, a variant, in the tonic minor, of the first movement's main thematic material:

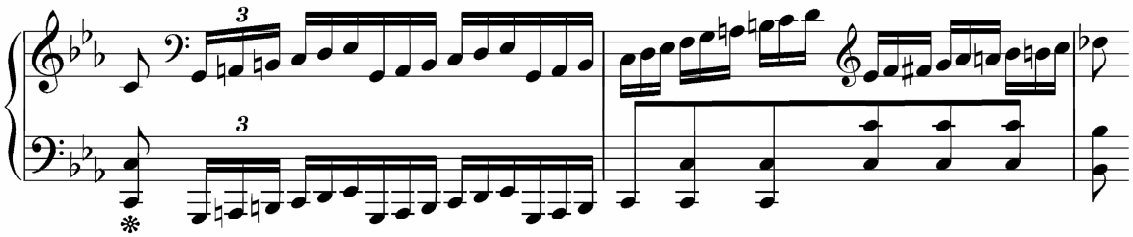
Ex. 101



The orchestration of this concerto has, up to this point, contained no unusual colour effects. In the storm section, however, the composer's use of percussion is quite extraordinary for its time and, in the following respect, it remains unique to this day, in being probably the only piano concerto to include an orchestral part for a second piano, playing only for sixty-two bars in *L'Orage* section. The pianos of Field's time were not capable of producing enough tone to dominate a full orchestra, playing *forte*, without their keyboards receiving the kind of treatment totally alien to Field's concept of piano-playing. Even Steibelt, though probably less sensitive to refinements of tone than Field, encountered the same difficulty in his own 'Storm' Concerto, and had suggested that it might be overcome by the doubling of the solo part on a second instrument. This probably suggested the idea to Field of writing, in this case, an independent second piano part for his 'Storm', thereby making musical history; the second piano part bears the

following instruction (Field's own French): 'Le second Pianoforte est indispensable, lorsque le Concerto est executé avec tout l'Orchestre, parsque un seul Pianoforte seroit trop faible pour exprimer l'orage.' Even then, Field's concerto has further surprising touches of instrumentation; its principal climax is marked by a resounding crash on the tam-tam, while a little later, after the storm has begun to subside, an extremely long pedal (forty-nine bars) is given out by a bell, tuned to the note B natural. It is probable that both these effects originated in the pit of the opera-house, but it was the first time they had made their appearance in a concerto. Paganini's Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 7, in which a bell is used for the well-known finale, *La Campanella*, is a later work than Field's Fifth Concerto. By the thirteenth bar of the C minor section, the storm is in full fury, conveyed mainly by a pattern similar to the triplet figure in the *Polacca* of the Third Concerto and by chromatic runs:

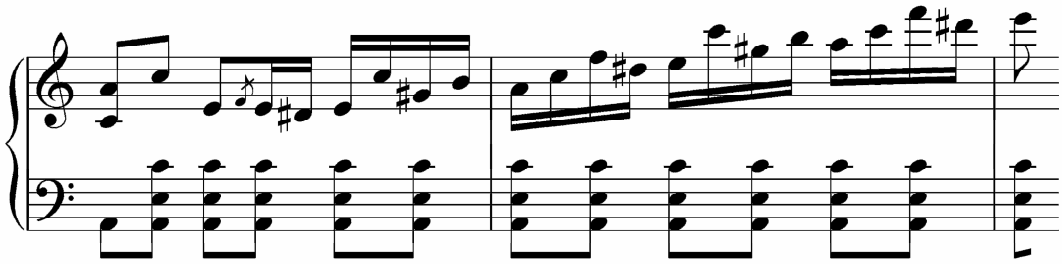
Ex. 102



The role of the second piano, as has been said earlier, is not only to double, thereby strengthening, the solo piano part, but also to augment it. This is largely achieved by following the first piano in unison, or at the octave, on the ascending scales, whilst mainly keeping a third lower when descending – the effect of these virtuoso 'double-third' scales considerably enhances the piano-writing in the storm section. There are two short four-bar sections where the solo piano is heard on its own, and towards the close of

L'Orage the second piano is confined to *tremolo* figures, while the soloist supplies a descending melodic-line in quaver chords. Not only is the addition of the tam-tam and bell a successful piece of scoring by the composer, but the use of the timpani (only the tonic-tuned drum during the 'Storm') with telling and varied rhythmic figures, shows the mark of an enlightened orchestrator. Like the first movements of the Second and Third Concertos, this movement, during *L'Orage* has a good many key-changes. A single stroke on the tam-tam marks a modulation to A minor where, after six bars of dominant pedal, the solo piano, unaided makes reference to its opening declamatory statement in this movement:

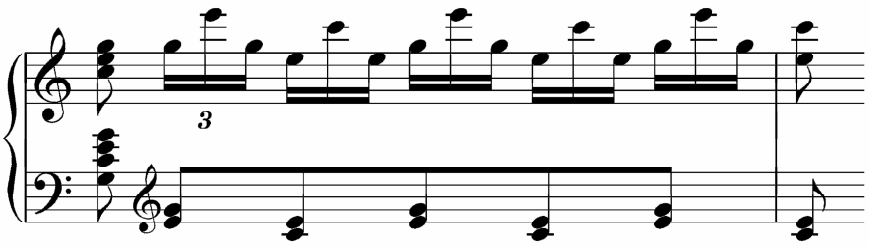
Ex. 103



A further modulation to B major signifies the start of the lengthy pedal, which features the bell. Again, Field's sensitivity as an orchestrator is apparent in the use he makes of this novel percussion instrument; a discreet use of rests to vary the part, ensures that the effect of the bell does not pall for the listener. Indeed, Field uses silence with great effect during the 'Storm', in a manner which Rossini was shrewd enough to follow in the 'Storm' section of his *William Tell* Overture. During the closing part of *L'Orage*, over the pedal B, the movement's first and closely-associated second subjects supply the main thematic material which becomes delicately ornamented by right-hand passage-work as the storm subsides, and the key returns, via E minor, to the tonic key. Here, a short *tutti*

which again makes reference to the *Polonaise*-like bridge-passage, leads, after strings quote the first subject, to the recapitulation beginning with a restatement of the piano's declamatory first contribution to this movement. The first subject, apart from some minor adjustments to the melodic-line, and with occasionally more thorough embellishments, closely resembles the corresponding statement in the exposition. However, the section of passage-work, which serves as a link between the first and second subjects, is here severely curtailed, and consists of a mere eight bars which cadence in the tonic minor, as opposed to the forty-eight bars in the exposition. The second subject, now in the tonic key, receives straightway the more expansive piano-treatment which occurred after four bars on the first appearance, although the overall restatement is now somewhat condensed. Passage-work, as before, is resumed by the soloist, but this very quickly terminates in a tonic six-four chord for both piano and orchestra At this point, Field introduces a written-out *cadenza in tempo*, accompanied by *pizzicato* strings, in most of which the left hand remains crossed over the right. Despite the example of Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto, published in 1811, an accompanied *cadenza* was still a very great innovation in Field's day, and for many years after it. There is much interesting piano-writing in this *cadenza*, including passages in double thirds in the right hand, a similar trill in chords, as well as a scale in the form of six-three chords, played by alternate hands, which concludes the *cadenza*, and which remains a difficult feat to this day. Once again, Field's 'bell' motif is conspicuous:

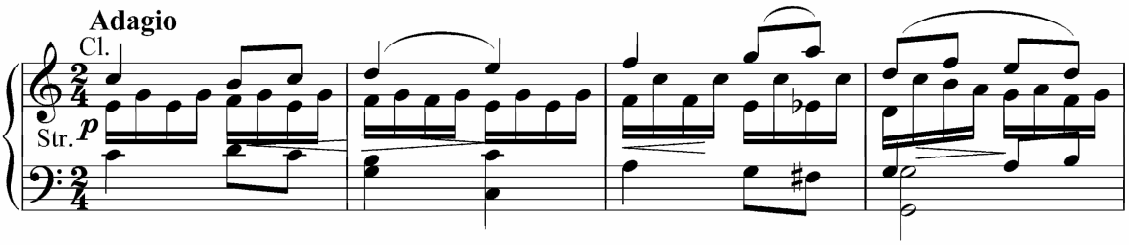
Ex. 104



A short *tutti* of eight bars, based on the *Polonaise*-type theme, brings this interesting, and effective movement to its close.

Just as Beethoven did, in his 'Pastoral' Symphony, Field follows his 'Storm' movement with a kind of 'Hymn of Thanksgiving': for such is the character of the second movement – a short *Adagio* in C major, which is not so much a slow movement proper as an introduction to the vivacious rondo which follows it, and to which it is linked thematically. It does not exhibit Field's personal romantic colouring and pianistic inventiveness in the same way as do the slow movements of the Second and Sixth Concertos (and even that of the First) and the G major interlude in the first movement of the Seventh. Its theme is gently given out by a solo clarinet over an undulating string accompaniment, in a manner reminiscent of the slow movement of Beethoven's 'Pathétique' Sonata:

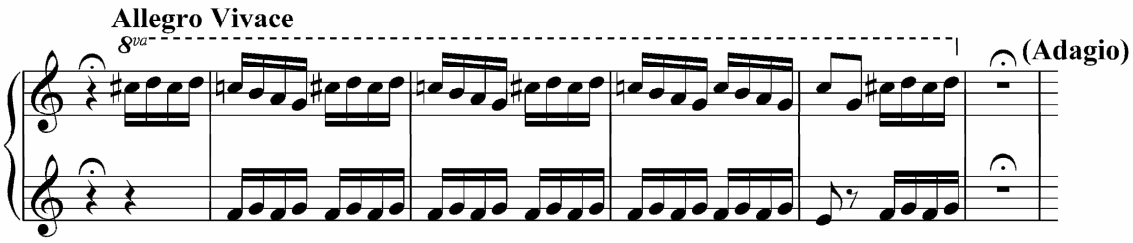
Ex. 105



An interesting feature of the *Adagio* is that it is entirely orchestral except for a moment when, as if unable to contain the high spirits he is waiting to unleash in the rondo, the

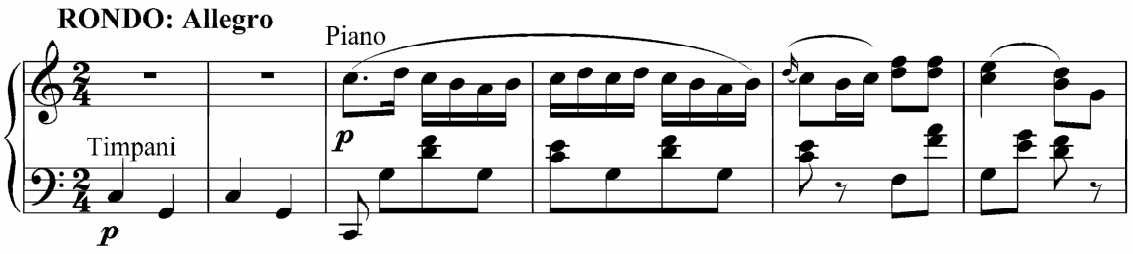
pianist interrupts the orchestra's hymn-like strains with a momentary anticipation of the rondo theme, and then, as if abashed, stops short in mid-passage to allow the orchestra to conclude its sedate theme. That the soloist's contribution to this *Adagio* of some thirty-eight bars is merely a reference to the ensuing rondo, would further indicate the purely introductory function of this slow movement, especially as the soloist's four-and-a-half bar's intrusion is in similar tempo to the concluding rondo:

Ex. 106



The finale, in two-four time, is of more concise proportions than the rondos of Field's earlier concertos, and is again in the composer's lighter vein. The main theme, announced by the piano over a sustained string accompaniment, is preceded by two bars of tonic and dominant, softly played by the timpani:

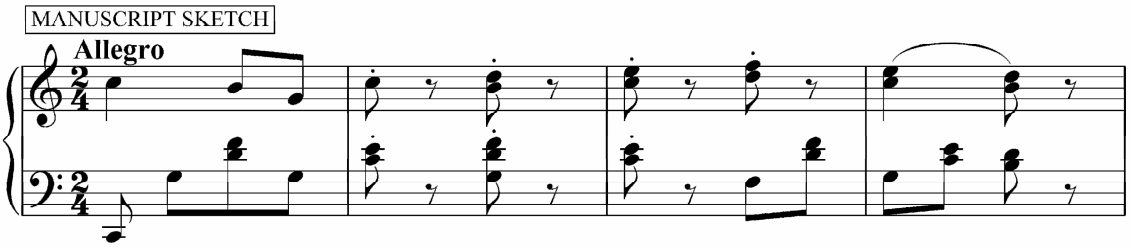
Ex. 107



There is a further connection between this rondo theme and Field's Fifteenth *Nocturne*; though dating from the end of his career, the theme with which the *Nocturne* begins was

certainly conceived very much earlier, for it appears in a manuscript sketch of the present rondo under discussion. The manuscript begins with a bright, but rather trivial little motif in C major, which Field soon replaced by an elaboration of it, to become the rondo theme of this Fifth Concerto. Some twenty years later, however, he returned to his original sketch and transformed it into the principal theme of the Fifteenth *Nocturne*:

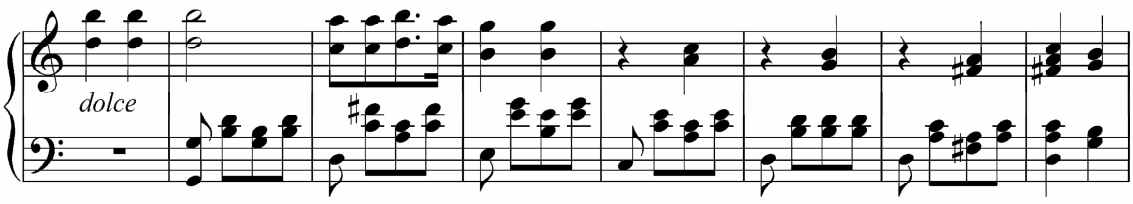
Ex. 108



A short *cadenza* is incorporated into the rondo theme's statement by the piano, just prior to the final reference to the theme, and some seven bars before the first orchestral *tutti*. It is interesting to observe here a practice which the modern score-reader could find momentarily disconcerting: one of the few extant scores of the Fifth Concerto is a handwritten manuscript score, dating approximately from 1830 and possibly, but by no means certainly, in Field's own hand. The layout of the score is somewhat unconventional by modern practice: from the top, the parts are Flute, Horns, Trumpets, Clarinets, Bass Trombone, Bassoons, First and Second Violins, Viola, Fortepiano (i.e. solo piano, which includes a reduction of the orchestral parts, when the concerto is performed without the orchestra), Cellos and Double Basses on one stave, and finally timpani – the parts for the second piano, tam-tam and bell are missing from the score, though they exist in the set of parts at the British Museum. Whilst the modern score-reader soon adjusts to the unusual layout, it is when the short *cadenza*, referred to above,

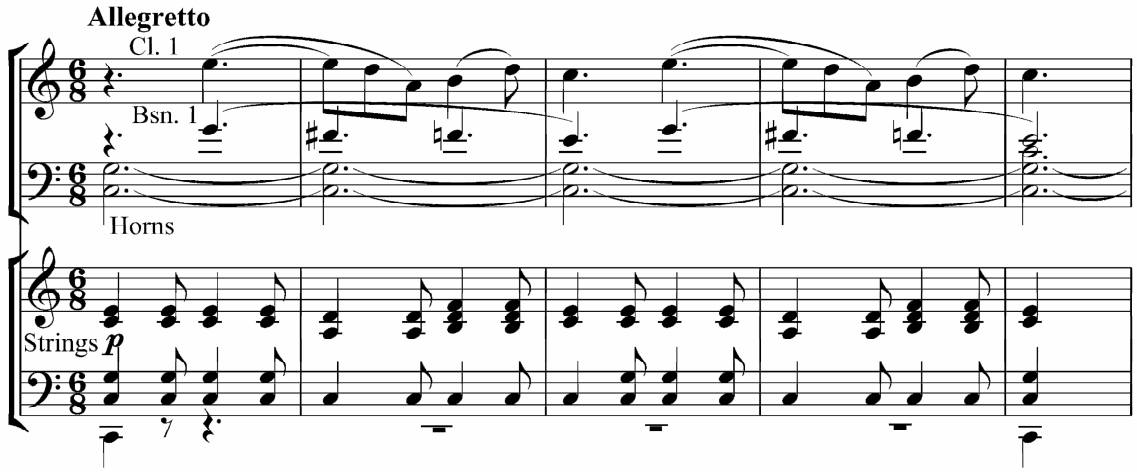
appears, that a further small piece of detective work is required; for, the *cadenza* is written out, using only one bar of the orchestral parts, and the soloist's part is fitted into the vacant staves, descending from the Flute line, initially using the odd-numbered staves until each successive line is required when the pianist's two hands become involved in the *cadenza*. A short orchestral *tutti*, making quite extensive use of peda1 points, makes way once more for the soloist, who now is mainly concerned with semiquaver passage-work, over the lightest orchestral accompaniment, which culminates in the first episode in the dominant – a theme of rather mundane quality:

Ex. 109



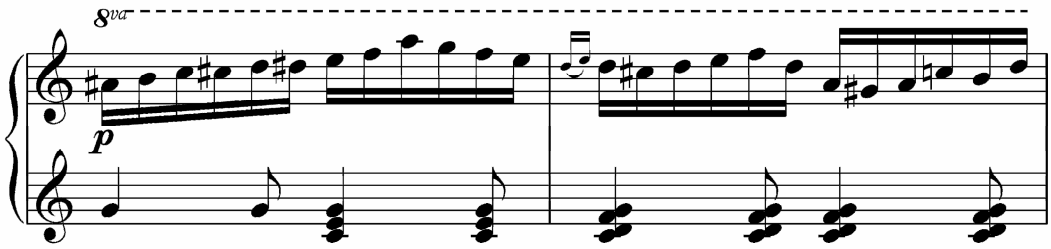
After a return to passage-work, a dominant peda1 soon sets the soloist off on a typically meandering lead-back into the rondo's main theme. This is announced, as before, except for some slight assistance from the wind section, although the passage-work which soon follows, does not, in this instance, lead to a short *cadenza*, but stops short at a half-close in C major. After a bar's pause, the time changes to six-eight for a charming pastoral *Allegretto* episode, which seems a bonus, when the usual light-fingered virtuosity elsewhere in the rondo is considered. This section is introduced by a rocking rhythm on a repeated tonic chord from the strings, before first clarinet announces the melody over a sustained tonic/dominant pedal from the horns, and first bassoon introduces a counter-melody:

Ex. 110



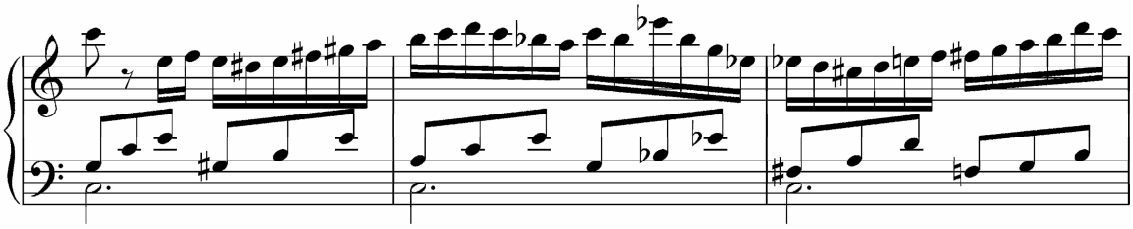
A particularly effective touch is the introduction of the flute, whose part imitates, canonically, that of the clarinet, just before the half-close is reached when the soloist enters. The successful allusions to the rustic piping of a shepherd, after the storm has abated, find counterparts, for example, in the *Ranz des Vaches* from Beethoven's earlier 'Pastoral' Symphony, or from Rossini's later *William Tell* Overture. Whilst Steibelt's 'Storm' Concerto is an earlier example than the works mentioned above, being first heard in 1798, it is a piece like J H Knecht's Symphony, entitled *Le portrait Musical de la Nature*, dating approximately from 1785, which suggested the kind of programme which later composers, such as Beethoven and Rossini and, during their lifetime, Field and Steibelt incorporated into their works. Conventionally the soloist elegantly embroiders the earlier clarinet melody above a long tonic pedal:

Ex. 111



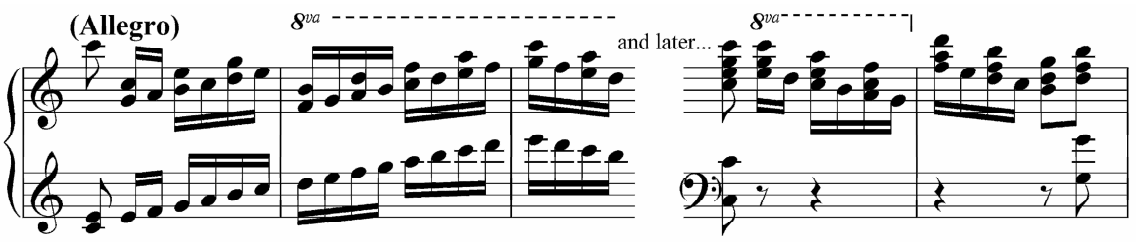
This type of figuration persists for over thirty bars, with strings discreetly amplifying the piano's left-hand part, while solo wind instruments softly enhance individual melodic phrases. In the closing bars, the soloist's pedal C is dropped an octave, the bass pattern becomes filled in and, while still retaining the tonic pedal till the end of this pastoral episode, an increasing use of chromaticism in the chord movement is now apparent:

Ex. 112



A particularly charging and inventive piece of filigree, across the basic six-eight rhythm, in demisemiquavers, sixteen to the bar grouped in duplet fashion, ends the section. A short *Allegro* section, based on the first episode, originally in the dominant but here in the tonic key, in which both soloist and orchestra participate, leads to the final restatement of the main rondo theme by the soloist, although this is soon brought to an abrupt halt with a half-close. From this juncture, involved and often strikingly novel keyboard effects propel the movement to its imminent close:

Ex. 113



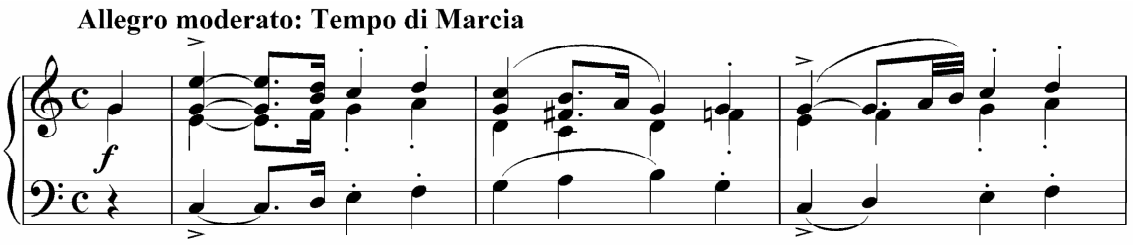
Even at this point, Field has one more surprise in hand, for the soloist's part ends on an interrupted cadence, with a first inversion dominant seventh chord in the key of A major; the orchestra then has fifteen bars with which to bring this most interesting concerto to its *fortissimo* conclusion.

Unfortunately, this concluding *Allegro* section is the weakest part of the movement, a fact of which Field was aware for, at some later date, he wrote on a printed copy of this page: 'cela ne valut rien'. However, though he never revised the score of the concerto movement, he produced, towards the end of his career, a solo arrangement of it which, among other changes, includes a greatly improved version of its final section. The whole of the Fifth Concerto is in unrelieved C major, which is its principal weakness. But despite this, and other imperfections, its engagingly naïve charm is more than enough to compensate for its shortcomings. It could be an entertaining and unusual addition to the repertoires of adventurous virtuosi.

CONCERTO NO. 6 IN C MAJOR

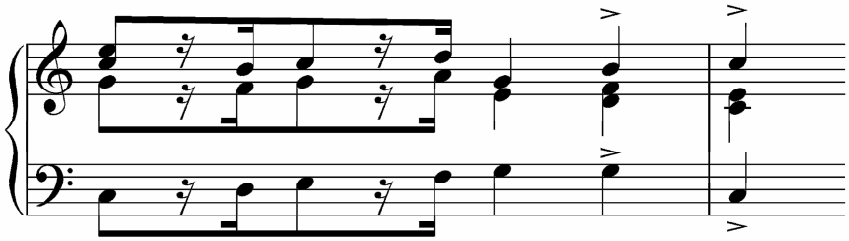
The Sixth Concerto, again in C major, opens as a grandiose military march:

Ex. 114



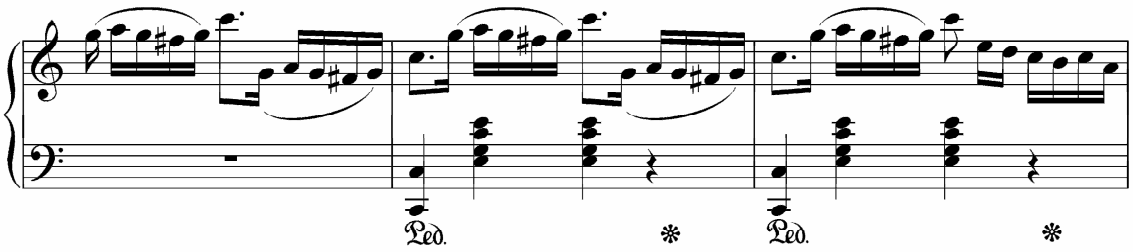
Field's seventh bar contains his familiar 'skipped' rhythm-pattern:

Ex. 115



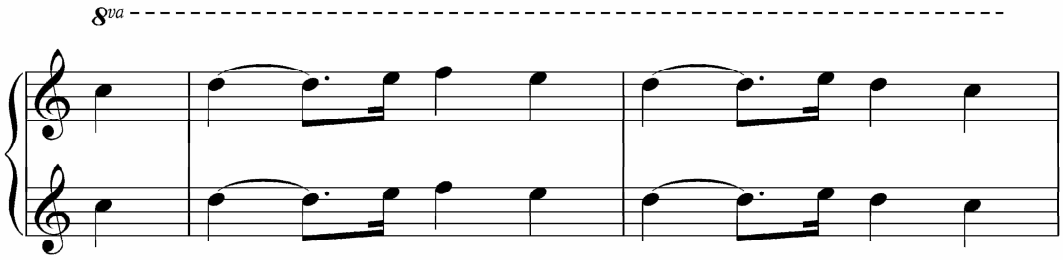
The instrumentation in this concerto aptly suits the heroic qualities displayed by the first theme; it is scored for flute, two oboes, clarinets in A, and bassoons, whilst a bass trombone is again added in the brass section, to complement the horns and trumpets – timpani in C and G, and the usua1 string contingent complete the orchestral resources. The long introductory *tutti* is effectively scored and, in contrast to the earlier concertos, contains several distinctive themes, even though much additional material is reserved for the soloist, and indeed for the orchestra in subsequent *tutti* sections. Despite brief excursions into keys such as D and E minors, Field here conforms to the conventions of first-movement concerto form by announcing his second main theme in the tonic. However, as if to compensate for this seemingly orthodox procedure, the composer allows the soloist to intrude, only for eight bars, in the opening *tutti*, well before the real end of the orchestral exposition:

Ex. 116



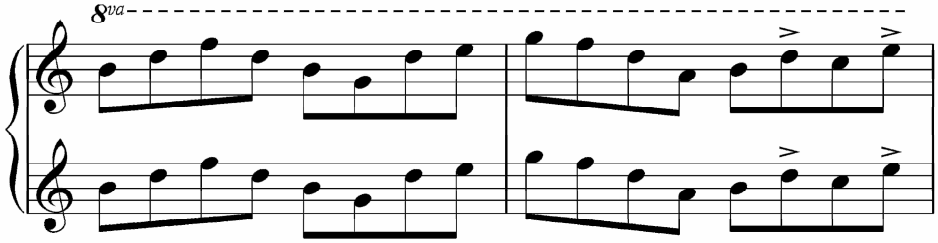
After a conventionally bustling *tutti*, dynamics are reduced and the instrumental writing is thinned out as the orchestral exposition is concluded by the sombre colour of a low C major chord from bassoons, horns and bass trombone together with a telling *pianissimo* timpani roll. The real entry of the piano in this movement exhibits a device familiar in romantic piano concerto writing: right and left hands play a melodic-line (derived from the first subject, instead of being a restatement or embellished version of it) an octave apart in the upper part of the keyboard while the orchestra accompanies:

Ex. 117



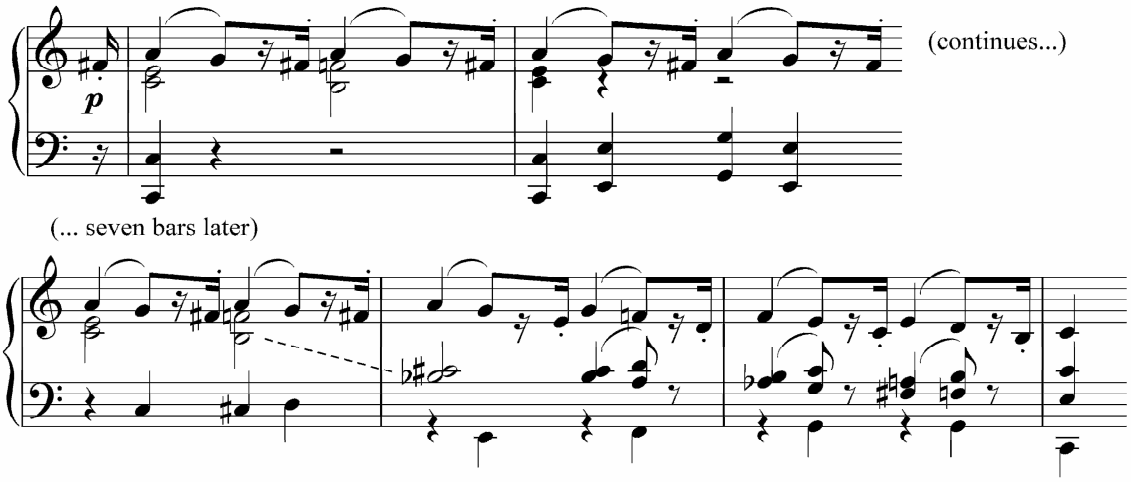
This is followed after two bars by:

Ex. 118



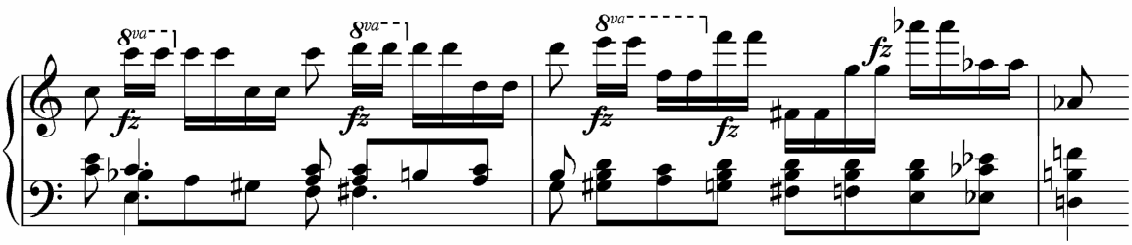
The finale of Chopin's F minor Concerto and also the first movements of concertos by Scriabin, Rachmaninov (3rd) and Poulenc provide further examples of this kind of writing. Sixteen bars after its entry, Field begins giving the piano characteristic decorative passages, firstly in triplets, then in semiquavers, while wind supported by *pizzicato* cellos and basses refer to the soloist's opening octave melody. After a more chordal passage from the piano, violins take over with a strange *ostinato* passage which in fact occurs twice as a link between two sections of pianistic virtuosity, and was only hinted at in the orchestral exposition – it is remarkably dissonant and harmonically forward-looking:

Ex. 119



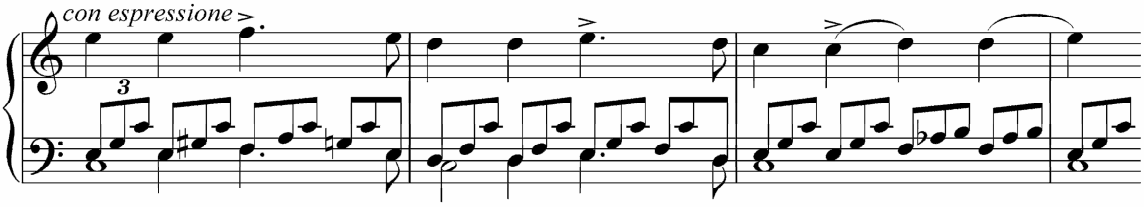
Further passage-work then follows, accompanied effectively by wind and strings, where the use of repeated notes is much in evidence and the piano-writing almost looks forward to Liszt, with its wider use of the keyboard:

Ex. 120



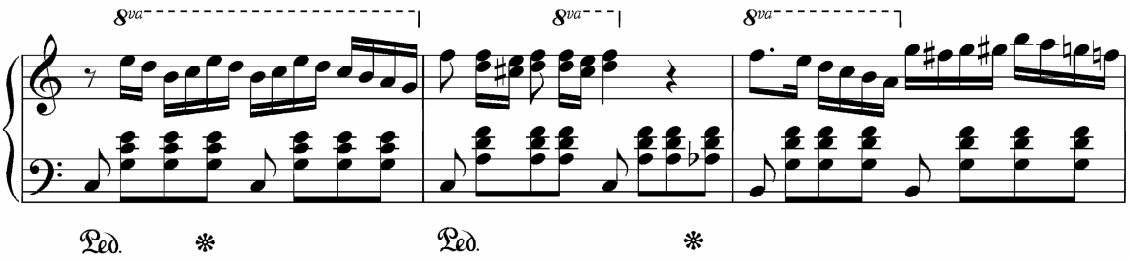
This soon leads into what would appear to be the second subject, though not quoted in the opening exposition, and still in the tonic key – again an example of Field's *cantilena* manner:

Ex. 121



A short, *cadenza*-like intrusion is all that ruffles the otherwise peaceful air created by the soloist, the orchestral comments here restricted merely to four separate chords. At the conclusion of this apparent second subject, the piano embarks on the type of convoluted passage-work seen earlier in the Second Concerto:

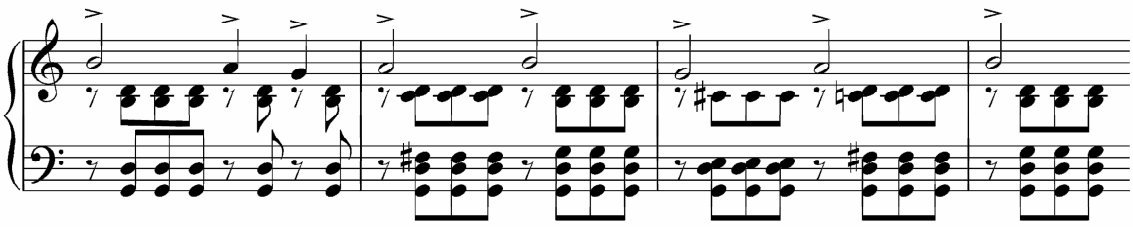
Ex. 122



Strings follow the piano's left hand, while woodwind echo the pairs of semiquavers of the right hand. If Field has been comparatively orthodox in introducing his second theme

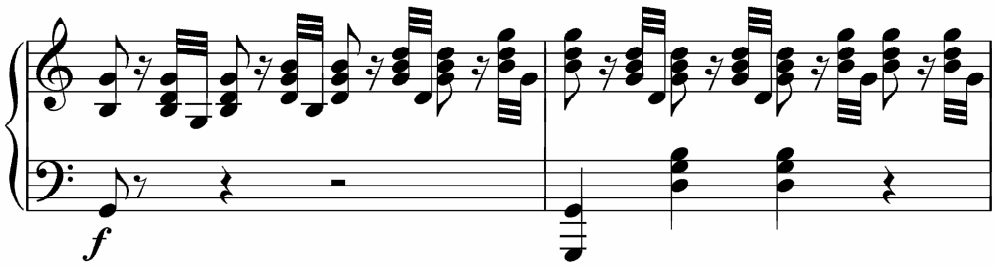
in the tonic in the orchestral exposition, the rest of the movement shows the composer experimenting with the formal restraints of first-movement concerto form, which culminates in a somewhat more successful synthesis in the first movement of the Seventh Concerto. In this present movement, the apparent second subject announced by the piano in the tonic, rather than the conventional dominant, will not reappear in the recapitulation, and was not heard in the opening *tutti*. It is, in fact, a superfluous theme, an effectively-written 'red herring', for it is only with the following theme, which was heard in the opening *tutti*, then in the tonic key, that a modulation to the dominant is well and truly established for the first time in the exposition:

Ex. 123



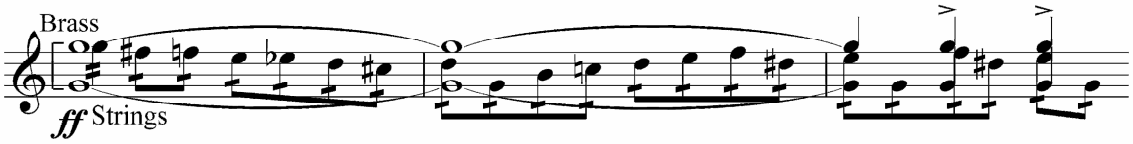
As far as the exposition of this concerto is concerned, this theme therefore assumes the roles of a second subject, though it, too, is absent from the recapitulation. The original 'string-quartet' writing, of the opening exposition, is directly transferred to the piano, with the same short interjections from the woodwind, and, in fact, this section is almost a direct transposition, except for some slight melodic alterations. At the point where, in the opening *tutti*, the soloist made his uncustomary intrusion, Field here introduces a similar section, harmonically speaking, though with new right-hand figuration:

Ex. 124



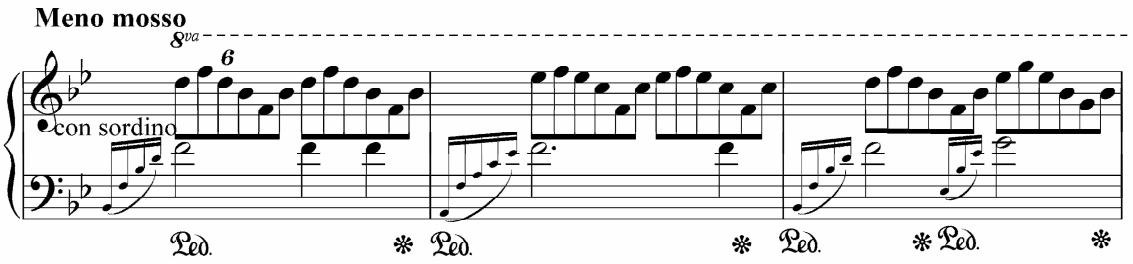
This soon gives way to the more usual semiquaver passage-work for the right hand, while the left hand latterly is involved in some interesting extended chords, mainly in tenths. Excitement is effectively maintained by introducing, firstly quintuplets, and finally, sextuplets, in the right hand, culminating in a written-out trill in the piano's high register. A very business-like *tutti* concludes the exposition, when both woodwind and strings are at times combined in a unison statement of this powerful new theme, while brass are assigned held pedal points:

Ex. 125



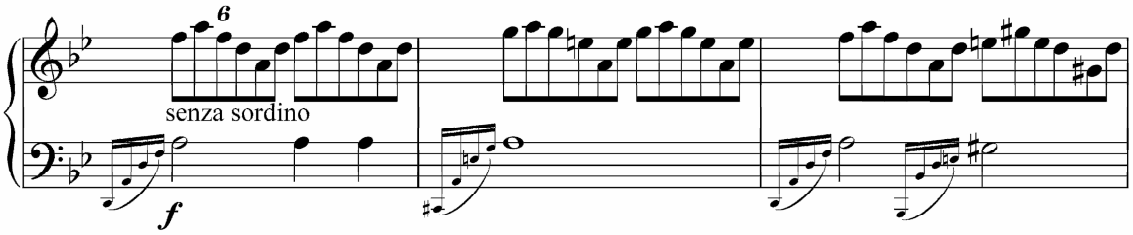
This soon subsides into a peaceful restatement of the concerto's opening theme, now in the dominant key, and with a characteristic pedal G, held throughout the twelve bars by the double basses. The calm is immediately disturbed by the soloist's chordal entry to mark the beginning of the development, but after eleven bars, a perfect cadence in the dominant is again reached. However, the first bassoon, with a distinctive solo, effects a modulation to B flat major, to a section marked *Meno Mosso*, where an entirely new theme appears in the left hand of the solo part:

Ex. 126



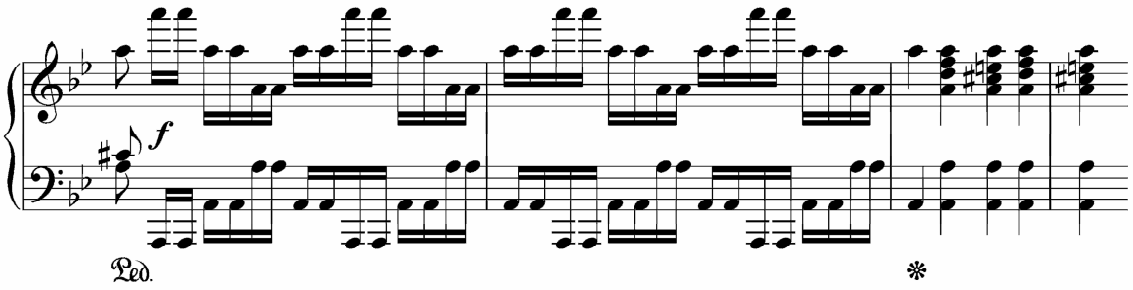
First horn follows the left-hand melody almost note-for-note, and strings support with a sustained cushion of sound, violins and violas playing with mutes. The second part of this theme, in D minor, is strongly reminiscent of Schubert's melody, *Der Wanderer*. However strong, though, the suggestion might be, Field's concerto was first performed in St Petersburg during the Lent season of 1819, and *Der Wanderer* published later in the same year, thus precluding the possibility of one composer having influenced the other:

Ex. 127



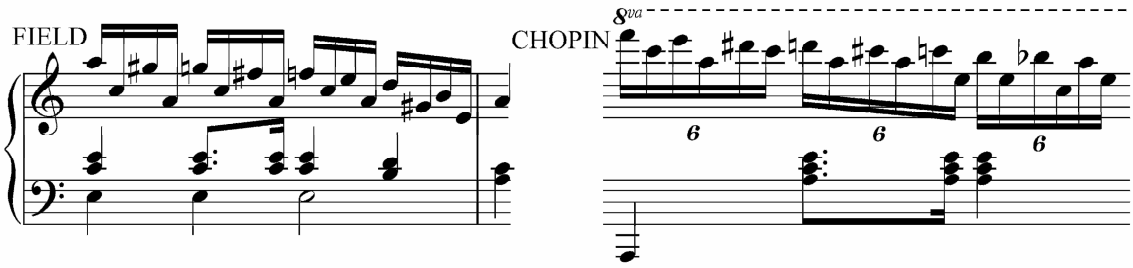
At the close of the *Meno Mosso* section, passage-work from the soloist signifies a return to the concerto's earlier and quicker tempo. The key moves from B flat major, via its minor, until strings and woodwind strongly affirm a half-close in D minor. The solo part, up to this juncture, has again made considerable use of repeated notes, which finally extend across the keyboard, prior to this half-close, in a manner suggestive of the end of the fourteenth variation from Brahms's *Paganini* set (Book One), just before the coda:

Ex. 128



The soloist now embarks on a long section of passage-work, largely of the sequential variety, in which a crotchet melody in the left hand is embellished by broken-chord figuration in the right, both hands at the extreme upper end of the keyboard. Mainly, the piano is completely dominant in the texture, although again Field, with characteristic economy, allocates certain short phrases to strings and solo woodwind instruments, sensibly omitting the basses in this delicate scoring. A modulation is made, via F major, to a short passage in A major, which, at its final cadence, is turned to A minor, where a fresh section of passage-work, marked *Più Lento*, unfolds. This is, in fact, a variant of a *bravura* figure which appeared first near the end of the exposition; its final bar is strongly suggestive of Chopin's *Étude* in A minor, Op. 25 No. 11:

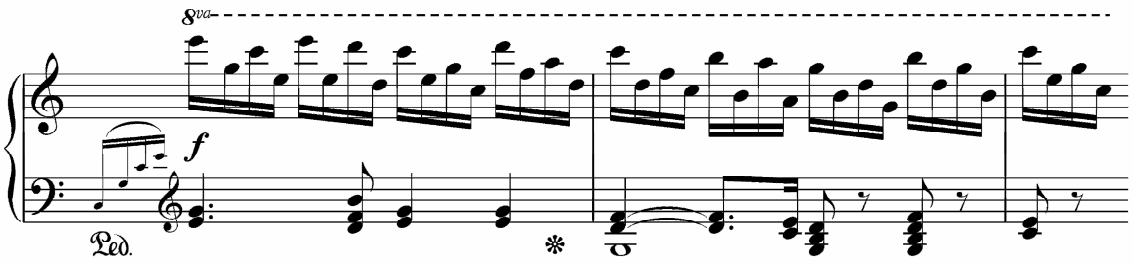
Ex. 129



First clarinet and bassoon sing out a short plaintive melody which marks the end of the development, as strings, and later the full orchestra, participate in a short *tutti* section, derived from the opening material, as the soloist begins the recapitulation. Here, Field

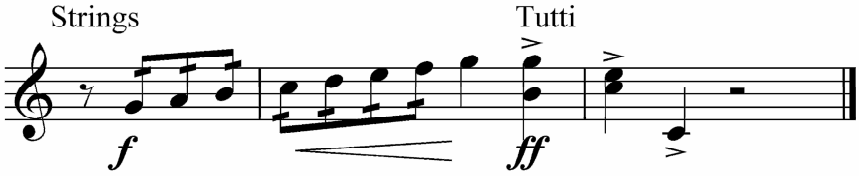
greatly condenses the exposition by having the piano enter some twenty-five bars later than earlier, with the chordal theme which just precedes the strange *ostinato*-type passage quoted above. At this corresponding point, Field indulges in one of his unusual shifts of key; by commencing the violin *ostinato*-figure a major third lower, the composer begins this passage now in the key of A flat major. However, with the aid of some chromatic harmony, Field, on this occasion, manages successfully to extricate himself from a situation, from which, in the past, he might well have experienced greater difficulty. The passage resumes its former tonality and cadences, as before, in the tonic key. Semiquaver passage-work then begins, and it becomes immediately apparent that a large portion of the exposition has been intentionally removed, possibly because of the rather complicated question of the second subject, and because the development was largely formulated from new, and quite expansive material. The composer omits all the second subject material (including the piano's 'red herring' theme), and proceeds straightway to the figuration, quoted earlier, which followed the second subject in the exposition. The recapitulation now quite closely resembles the exposition, naturally with the passage-work here in the tonic key, but, at the point where a written-out trill appeared earlier, a brief tucket from horns and trumpets now leads into a slightly extended coda. The first half consists of woodwind (mainly clarinets and bassoons, or oboes and bassoons), with some slight assistance from the first horn, quoting the main theme of the movement, while the soloist embellishes this with figuration in the right hand, the left hand quite closely following the wind group:

Ex. 130



The soloist's final chord leads into the seventeen-bar closing *tutti* which initially refers back to the busy unison writing, quoted at the end of the exposition. The final reference to the main theme again receives effective treatment; clarinets have the melody, against which *pizzicato* cellos, doubled by first bassoon, supply a constantly-moving bass-line in quavers. Field's closing bars are reminiscent of the last movement of Beethoven's First Symphony:

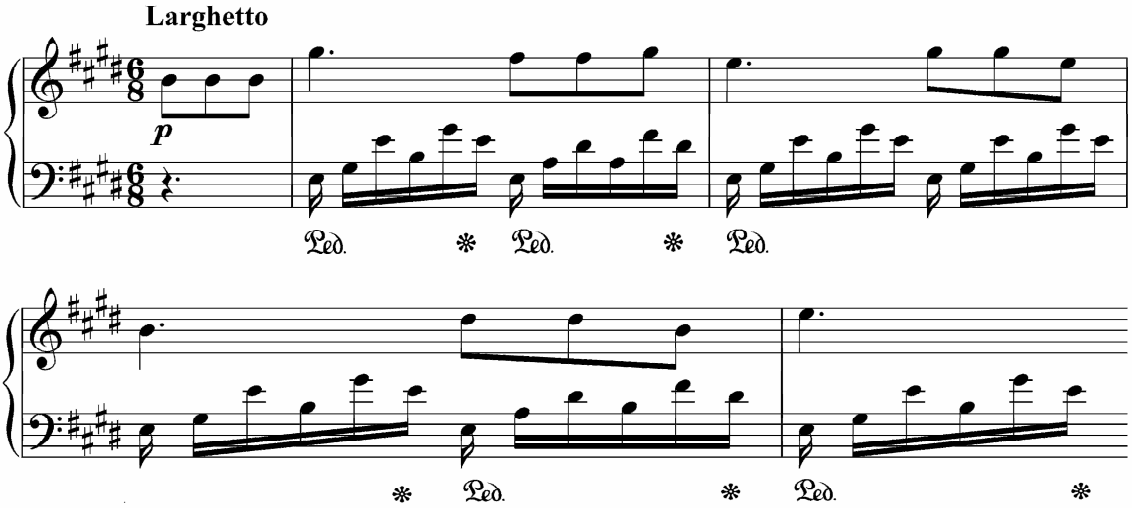
Ex. 131



For a slow movement Field returned to his Sixth *Nocturne*, published some five years before the concerto. This he transposed from F to E, favouring a mediant relationship, as Beethoven did, for the second subject of his 'Waldstein' Sonata. The two versions of the *Nocturne* are identical, except for the transposition, and the composer provides it with a delicate accompaniment of strings, woodwind and two horns in E, as the slow movement of this present concerto. It must, however, be added that a few discreet omissions, by the soloist, of doubled melodic phrases are advisable; such instances would, for example, be when first clarinet and solo oboe (only one is required in the slow movement) indulge in a delicate piece of canonic writing, or when a falling

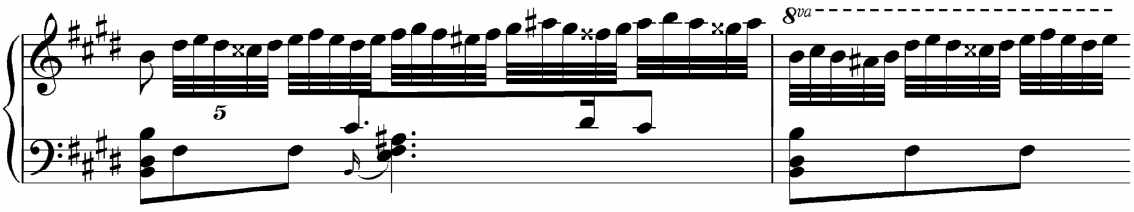
phrase is given to the first horn, to be played *pianissimo*, at the close of the movement. The soloist announces the main theme, against a *pizzicato* string accompaniment:

Ex. 132



Field's characteristic use of pedal-point is again evident in this movement. A slightly embellished repeat of the main theme, with some subtle harmonic alterations, leads to a new section, in the dominant. Here the piano-writing is more decorated, the strings briefly accompany *arco*, and solo woodwind instrument lightly enhance the soloist's left-hand melody:

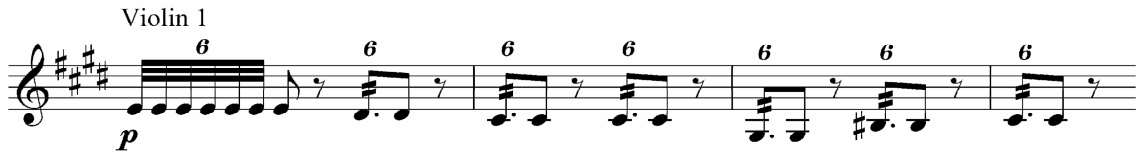
Ex. 133



A few brief bars in B minor, followed by a return to the major, usher in a restatement of the main theme, ornamented as before, which proceeds, after a short *cadenza*, to a further

statement of the main theme, now in the relative minor. To heighten the dramatic effect, Field gives the accompanying strings (except for the *pizzicato* basses) the following effective figure, played *arco*:

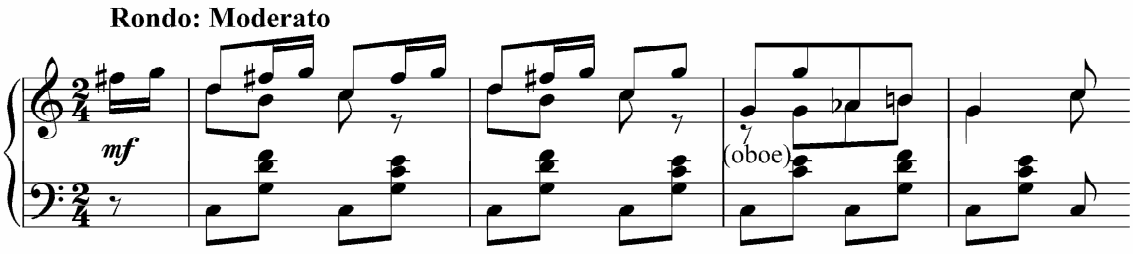
Ex. 134



The more florid section, originally in B major, now makes a short appearance in G sharp minor, before a return to the tonic key marks the restatement, now embellished with demisemiquavers, of the main theme. Strings, on this occasion, remain silent, while the wind group softly emphasizes the first three quavers in each bar. The soloist introduces a gently-rocking closing theme (the Sixth *Nocturne* is, in fact, entitled 'Cradle-Song' in some editions), leading to a return of the earlier B major section, now in the tonic key. A most sensitive use of solo wind instruments, echoing the dying phrases of the piano, brings this lullaby to its serene and peaceful close. Field's use of his orchestral resources has here been exemplary; whilst the temptation to add new counterpoints is never succumbed to, the texture is interestingly varied throughout.

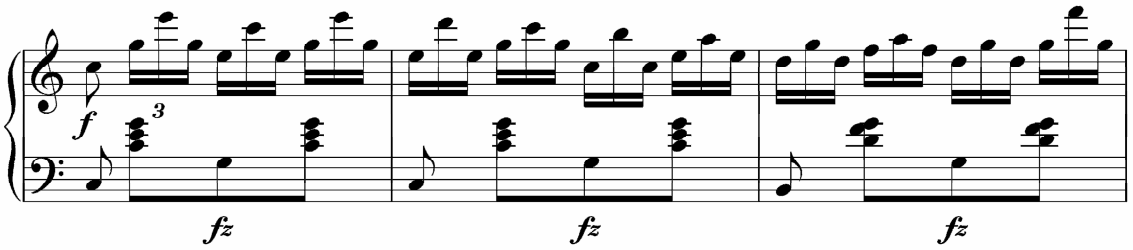
The rondo is, by comparison, the slightest and lightest in all Field's concertos. It is based on an unusual theme, in which the composer seems, on occasions, to be favouring a quasi-oriental mode:

Ex. 135



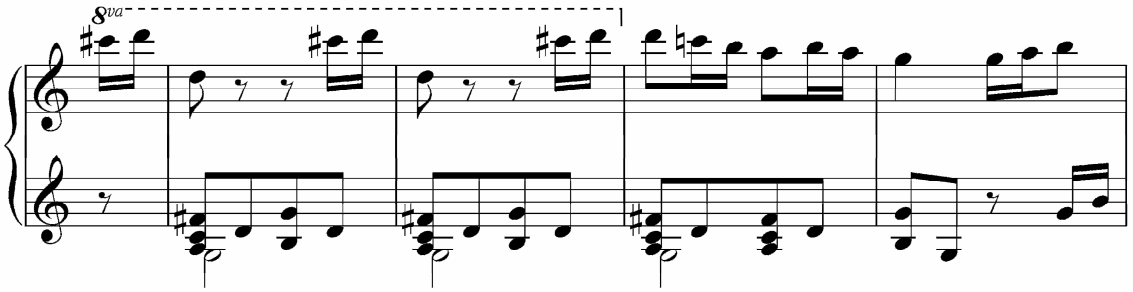
Sustained strings, again with some use of pedal-points, accompany the first half of the rondo theme: the characteristic phrase given to the oboe adds a dash of oriental colour. Conventionally, the main theme is ternary in structure, and a short, but lively *tutti* of eight bars sets the soloist off with passage-work, in triplets, while strings follow the accompaniment figure of the piano's left hand:

Ex. 136



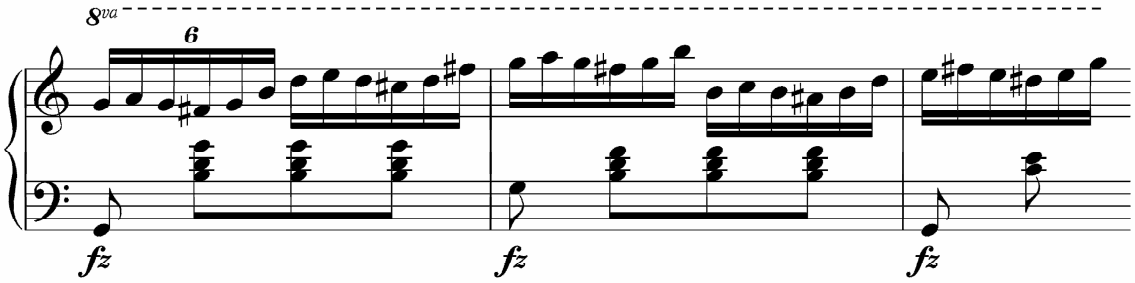
This leads to the first episode, in the dominant, which begins over a tonic/dominant drone from the lower strings:

Ex. 137



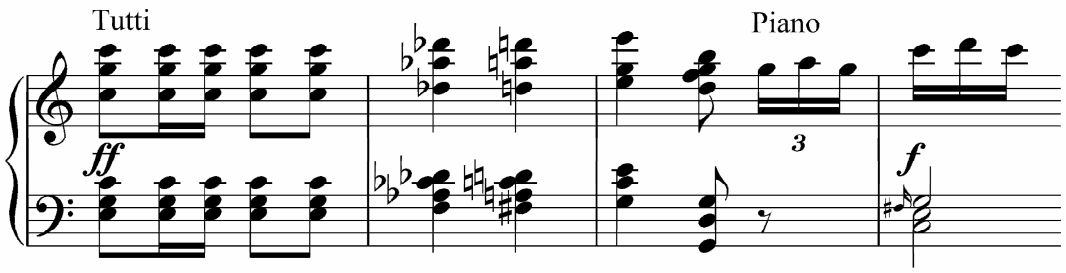
Very soon, characteristic passage-work returns to the solo part:

Ex. 138



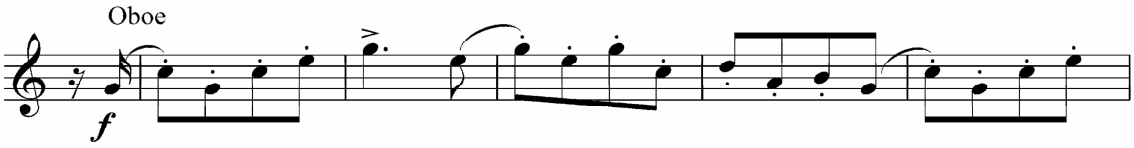
This passage-work culminates in a return of the main rondo theme, which Field successfully varies by altering the modulation which marks the middle of his tripartite theme; on the first occasion, a cadence in E led back, after a pause, to the closing statement of the rondo theme – in this instance, the cadence is now in B. Furthermore, the composer incorporates a short, five-bar intrusion into the soloist's part, by suddenly transferring the musical content to the woodwind, allowing the soloist then to continue, before reaching a brief *cadenza*. The *cadenza* is followed by nine bars which conclude the second appearance of the rondo theme. Semiquaver passage-work in triplets returns to the solo part which, for some bars, mainly concerns itself with scales, both diatonic and, later, chromatic. A fifteen-bar section, marked *Più moto*, where the piano-writing changes from scale-passages to broken-chord figuration, leads to a brief *tutti* which acts as an orchestral link to introduce the coda. It is the kind of passage seen earlier in the *Polacca* of the Third Concerto, and similar to Chopin's usage in his *Grande Polonaise Brillante*:

Ex. 139



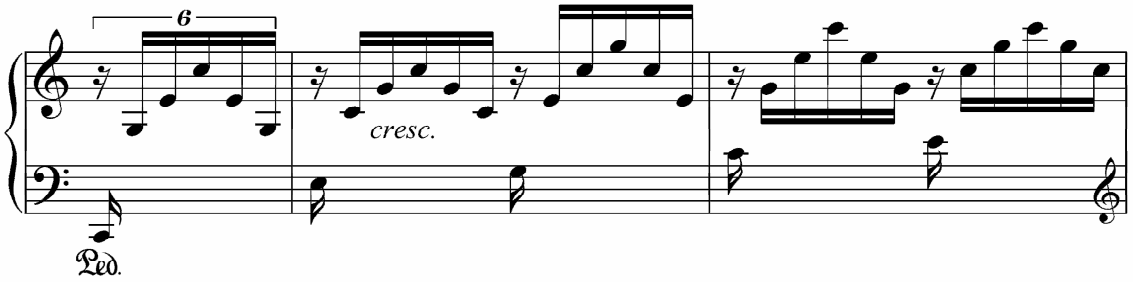
The soloist launches into some sparkling passage-work over a tonic/ dominant drone from the strings, while first oboe, joined later by first horn, is given a rather chirpy little tune, decorated by the piano with triplets:

Ex. 140



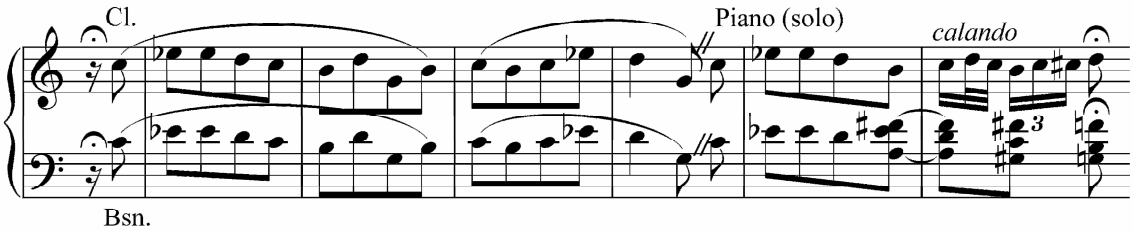
The piano-writing becomes more and more elaborate, culminating in the following figure in wide arpeggios:

Ex. 141



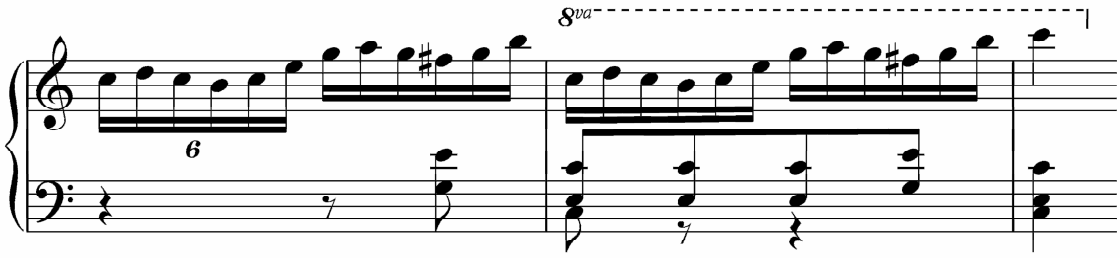
At this juncture, Field introduces a six-bar section which momentarily disturbs the otherwise light-hearted mood of the movement. Solo clarinet and bassoon softly intone a mournful melody, which strongly hints at Russian origins:

Ex. 142



The soloist then resumes tempo with a *pianissimo* reference to the rondo theme, before triplet passage-work, with some effective *bravura* writing, brings the piece to its close. A final allusion to the opening figure of the main theme appears in the soloist's last bars, there being no short concluding *tutti*, as piano and orchestra finish simultaneously in this concerto. However Field's 'bell' motif is never very far away, and here appears in the left-hand part, just before the close:

Ex. 143



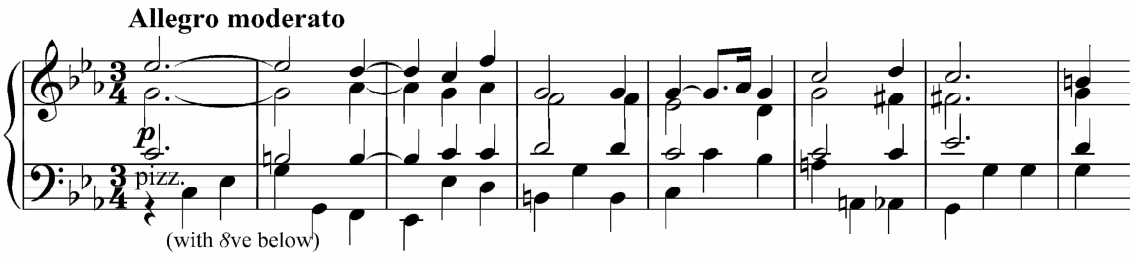
Whilst this rondo includes much florid, and attractive passage-work, there are no real contrasting episodes of any melodic distinction. Nevertheless, an over-long finale of the kind seen in the Second Concerto, would undoubtedly here have caused an imbalance because of the rather protracted, and formally somewhat experimental first movement, as well as the more extended slow movement of this Sixth Concerto. Field, perhaps wisely, decided that a cheerful and somewhat frivolous conclusion, largely reliant on the immediate impact of its piano-writing and apt scoring, would best round off this work.

CONCERTO NO. 7 IN C MINOR

The first movement of Field's Seventh Concerto was performed by its composer in Moscow, in 1822. The completed work, however, was not published until 1834, owing to his long indecision about its finale. The first complete performance took place in Paris, on December 25, 1832. It is Field's only concerto in a minor key, and its first movement could certainly be considered as the most interesting, if not the most successful, of his extended pieces. Excluding the additional percussion instruments and the second piano part in the Fifth Concerto, Field's last concerto is scored for the fullest resources required to date – flutes, oboes, clarinets in B flat and bassoons, all in pairs, trumpets using both C and E flat crooks, and horns crooked in C, E flat and G, changing crooks during the course of the music (two of each instrument specified), and the now familiar bass trombone. Timpani tuned to tonic and dominant, together with the normal string section, complete the orchestral requirements. Nevertheless, the marginally greater number of instruments, in this concerto probably more than in any of Field's other works in this form, is employed with the utmost economy, the composer deriving real effect from the often extremely light and transparent texture, which the orchestral writing exhibits.

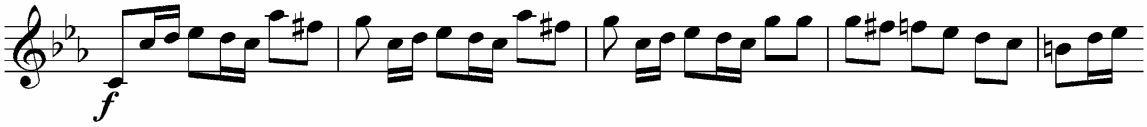
Two soft timpani rolls introduce a serious, even pathetic, theme on clarinets and bassoons, with *pizzicato* cellos and basses:

Ex. 144



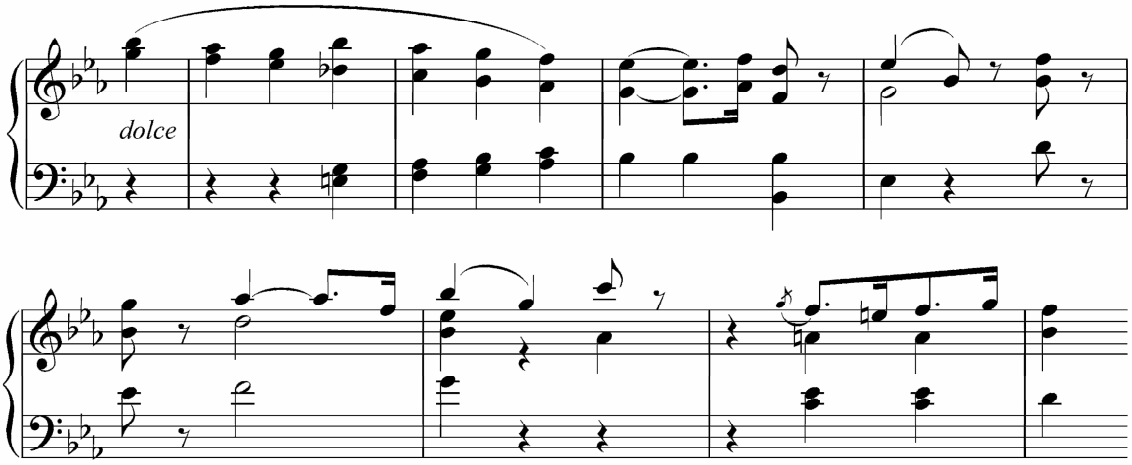
This quickly leads to an energetic violin-figure, which is of considerable importance in the work's subsequent unfolding:

Ex. 145



The figuration of the previous example persists for some bars, before ushering in the gentler second subject, again allotted to woodwind, mainly clarinets and bassoons:

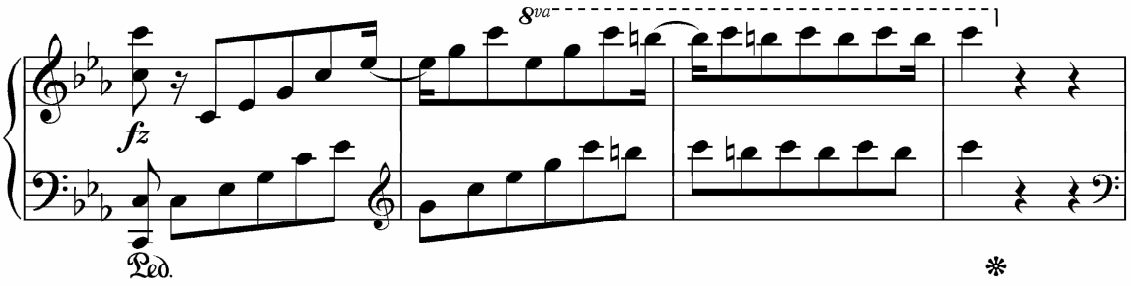
Ex. 146



The characteristic 'skipped' rhythm-pattern is again evident in the seventh bar and, as in some previous cases, the second subject is introduced, even in the orchestral exposition, in accordance with true symphonic key-schemes, rather than more conventionally confining its first statement to the tonic key, thereby avoiding a real double-exposition. The second half of this subject reveals an impressive use of solo wind instruments, over a rocking quaver-figure from violins, steadied by *pizzicato* cellos and basses on the first beat of each bar. After a half-close in the tonic, the earlier, vigorous violin-figure resumes, and leads to a quiet restatement of the first subject by the strings, before the

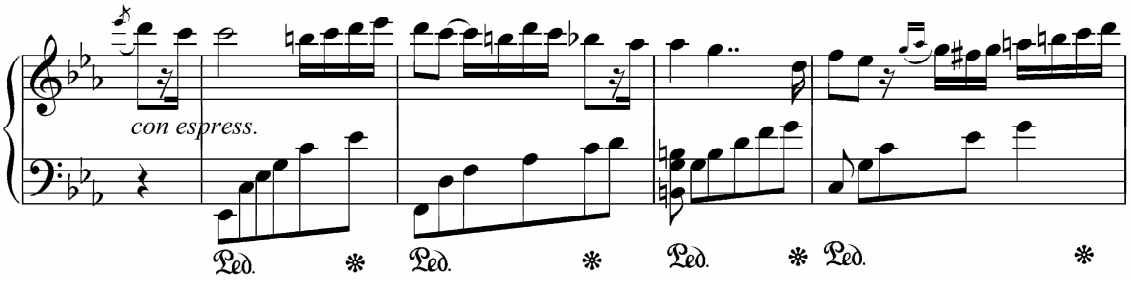
dynamics die down to herald the soloist's first statement. Over the initial drum pattern, played this time on viola and timpani, the piano makes its entry with a series of *bravura* flourishes based on arpeggios:

Ex. 147



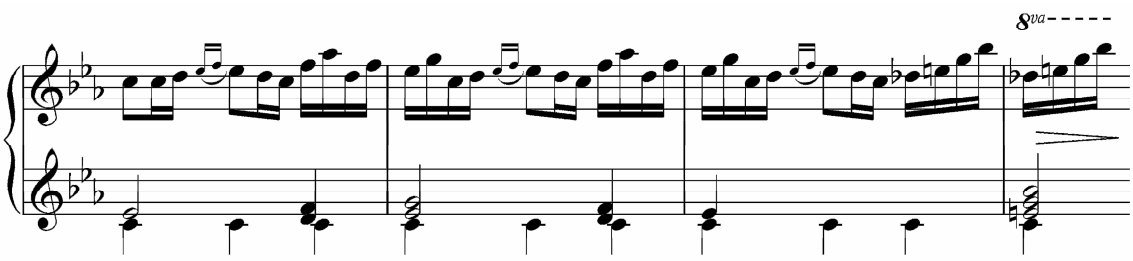
Shortly afterwards, the soloist, for his very free statement of the first subject, is given this effective, and rhapsodic sentence:

Ex. 148



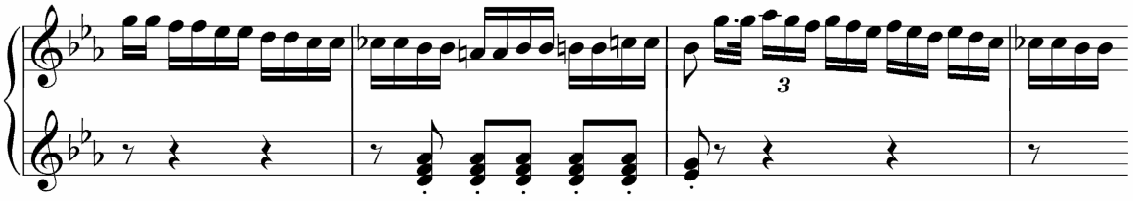
For the solo instrument Field writes this version of the orchestral introduction's bridge-passage material:

Ex. 149



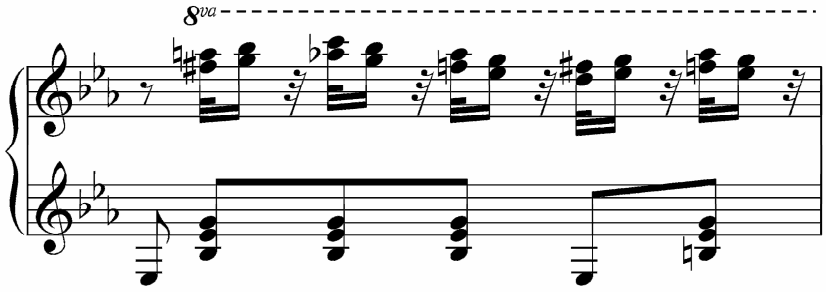
Passage-work based on this figuration culminates, after some successful enharmonic modulations, in the piano's statement of the second subject, with an effectively contrived lead-in, in semiquaver sextuplets which descend in a long and meandering course. The first half of the second subject is stated, quite simply, by the soloist, merely amplifying the left-hand accompaniment to become a rocking quaver-figure, and introducing the most delicate embellishment in the bar prior to the 'skipped' rhythm-pattern, which is retained here intact (the key is the same as that of the orchestral exposition, namely the relative major, E flat). The second half of the second subject is more characteristically decorated with semiquaver passage-work, and leads to a statement of its closing phrases, where repeated notes figure prominently in the piano part:

Ex. 150



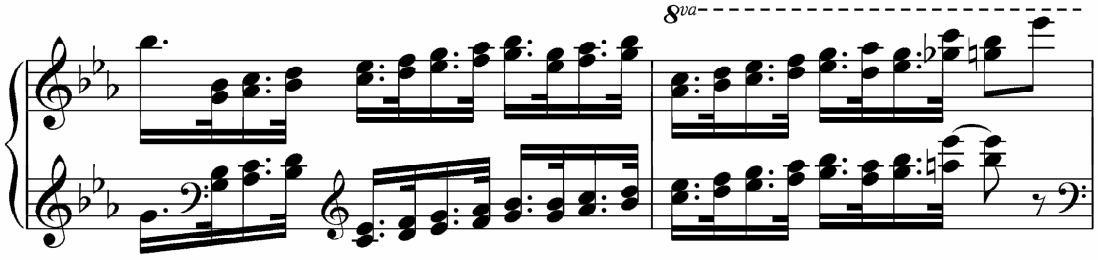
A perfect cadence in the relative major is reached, from where the figuration in the solo part becomes more involved and varied on its journey towards the closing *tutti* which will mark the end of the exposition. Patterns in thirds:

Ex. 151



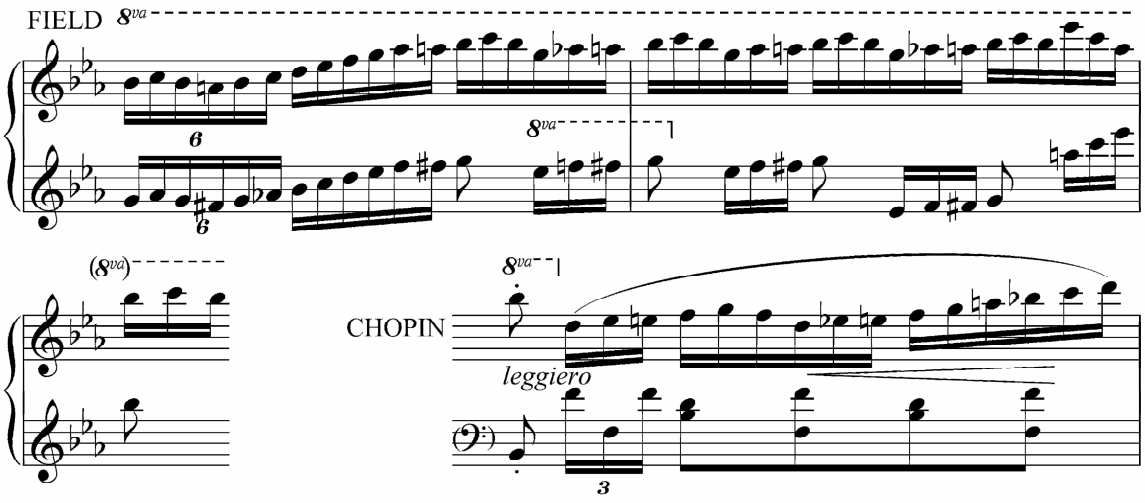
and in double thirds:

Ex. 152



are frequent. There are also convoluted passages in sixths, as well as in tenths, and, in the following example, a phrase strongly reminiscent of a similar pattern in Chopin's *Grande Polonaise Brillante* occurs:

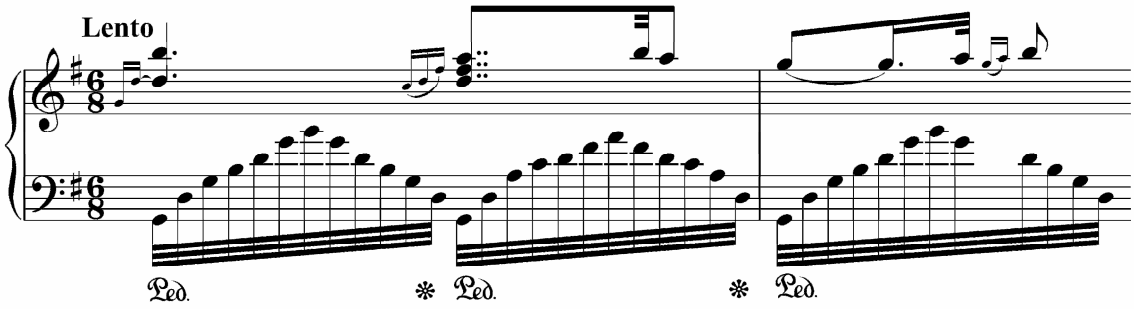
Ex. 153



Towards the climax, Field writes filigree patterns in demisemiquavers, before some very gymnastic octave leaps lead to the final ascending scale of E flat, the hands a tenth apart, which signifies the end of the soloist's contribution to the exposition. It is interesting to observe that, at the conclusion of the scale mentioned above, the composer gives the soloist, together with the strings, three cadential chords which lead into the closing *tutti* section; however, as happens at the corresponding point at the end of the subsequent recapitulation, Field omits the final chord from the piano part. In this case in the exposition, the soloist, after reaching the end of the E flat scale, follows this with a second-inversion chord of E flat, then a root-position dominant seventh chord in this key, but the final root-position E flat chord is reserved for the orchestral *tutti*. Perhaps Field felt that this could provide as acceptable a join, as would have been the case if the solo part had included the final chord, because the sudden *forte* intrusion of every orchestral player (except for timpani) would certainly have swamped the then far-less-penetrating tone of the piano. The *tutti*, thematically linked to the important violin-figure of the exposition, leads to a modulation to the key of G major, and a change of time to six-eight for the start of the development section. At this juncture, however, Field, instead of the

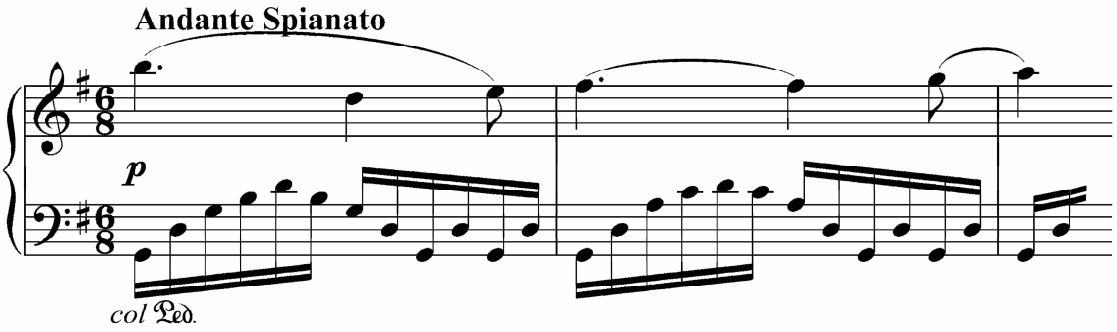
accepted practice, replaces the development by two independent episodes, one in G and the other in A, which are complete in themselves, though they merge into the outbursts of pianistic *bravura* which frame them. The present G major interlude was subsequently published as *Nocturne* No. 12, and it soon became one of Field's best known melodies; in this instance, it is accompanied in the concerto by the strings, with the merest help from solo phrases on woodwind, coming to rest over a fading dominant pedal intoned by first horn:

Ex. 154



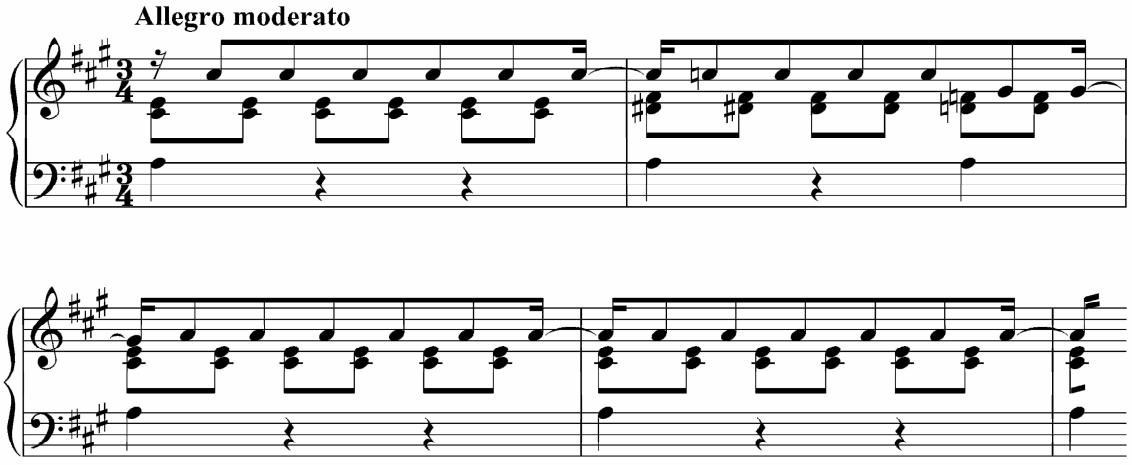
The principal interest throughout this section, and, indeed, when heard as the Twelfth *Nocturne* which is largely identical, except for some very minor alterations such as the use of the 'bell' motif in the final bar of the concerto usage, apart from its charming melody, lies in the harp-like accompaniment of the left hand. This is the only instance in Field's music of a formula which was to become over-popular with later pianist-composers. It was, in fact, after hearing Field play this concerto in 1833 that Chopin added the *Andante Spianato* to his *Grande Polonaise Brillante*. It would be hard not to see the similarities between the Field interlude and the Chopin movement which was first heard in 1835, in the harp-like bass, floating theme and filigree decoration common to both, as well as the same choice of key:

Ex. 155



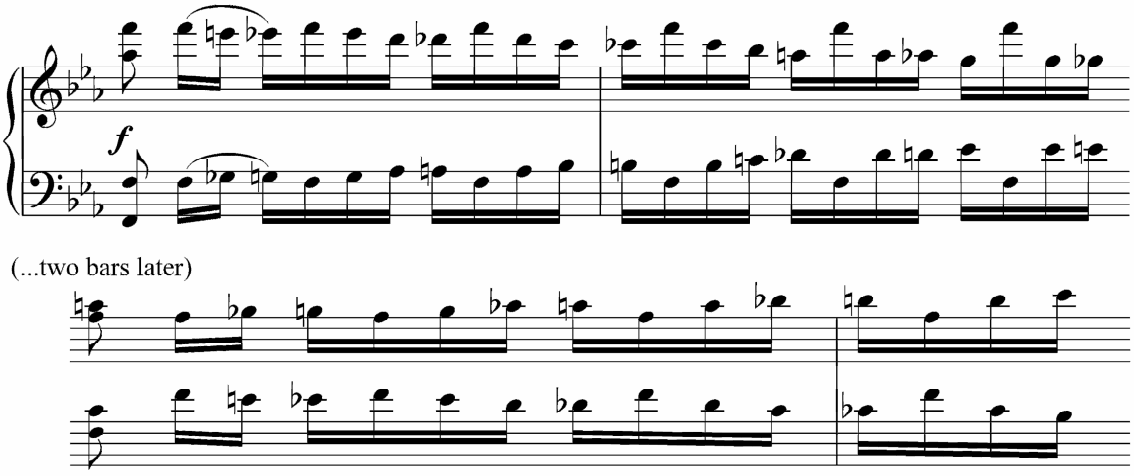
After this tender and dreamlike interlude, the movement awakens again with the development proper, which begins with an arpeggio-based flourish in G minor for the soloist, after the pattern of its first entry. This is followed by further *bravura* material based on the violin-figure of the exposition, firstly in C minor, leading to A minor. During this brief section, Field's use of running-basses again becomes quite a prominent feature. The key of A minor changes to the major, for a second interlude, quite different in style to the earlier one in G. 1t retains the basic tempo of the movement, and is largely concerned with a pulsatingly syncopated piano part, enriched by muted strings, woodwind and horns:

Ex. 156



As this A major interlude continues, more semiquaver passage-work is introduced in the soloist's right-hand part, and it is then abruptly concluded by an interrupted cadence, as a unison F from oboes, bassoons, horns, and the soloist in octaves, launches into the closing section of the development. In these last bars, invertible counterpoint assumes some importance in the passage-work, when Field also indulges in some rather pedantic notation in each hand, where B natural and C flat are concerned:

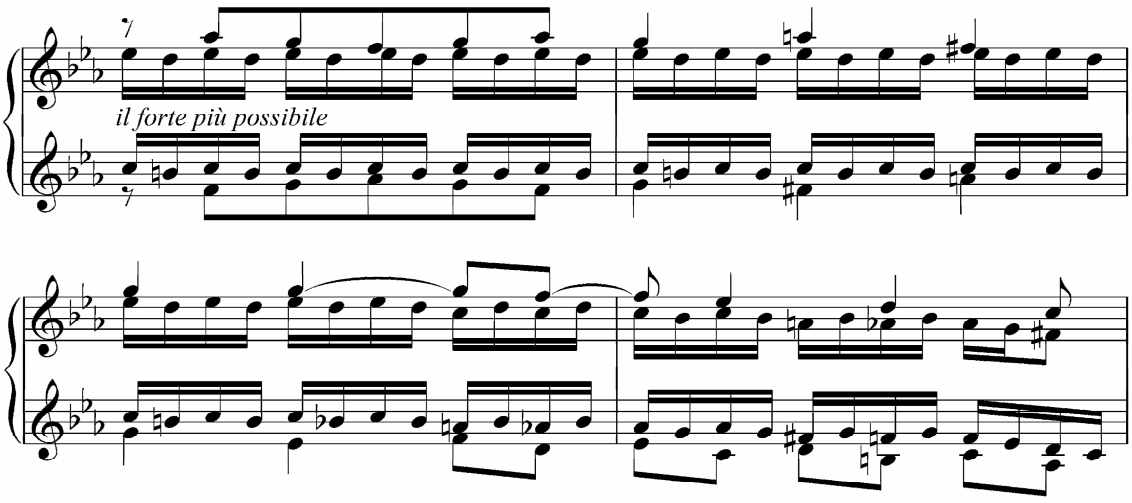
Ex. 157



After eight bars of dominant preparation, the previous two soft timpani rolls signify the end of the development and the start of the recapitulation, which consists of the first subject now played *forte* by the full orchestra, followed immediately by the second main subject as a piano solo, conventionally in the tonic major. Field's method in embellishing his restatement of the second subject seems to follow the pattern of alternate bars, where the melodic-line is either vastly altered or represents an exact transposition of previous material. At the conclusion of the second subject, a short *tutti* C minor chord sets the soloist off on his final section of passage-work, which exhibits even greater luxuriance in the type of figuration used. A short excursion back into the tonic major serves as the

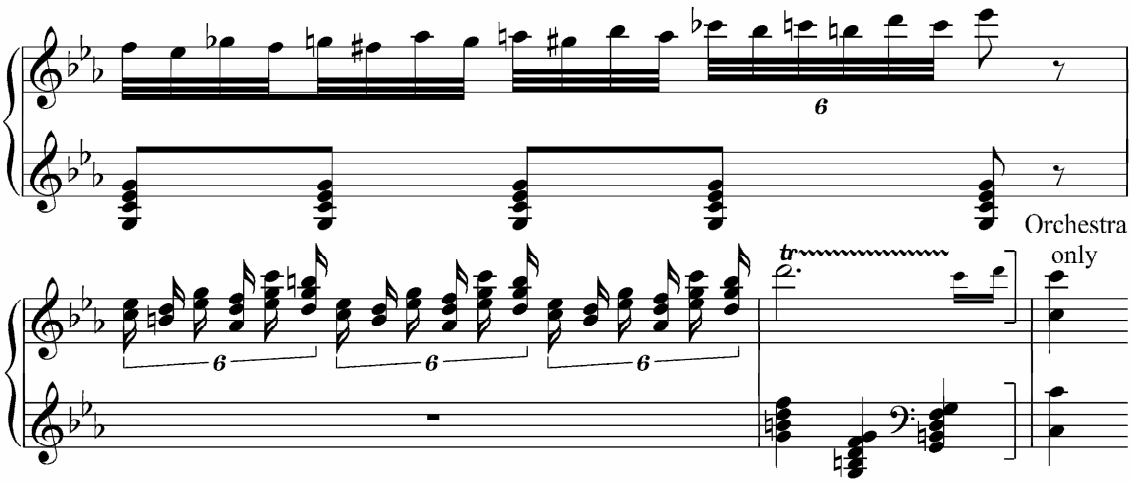
slightest relaxation in momentum before the home key returns, as the soloist embarks on the concluding passage-work. Again, the contrapuntal element can be observed, as, for example, Field's use of a dual vocal-line in counterpoint, round a double trill:

Ex. 158



Over a dominant pedal of some nine bars in length, the soloist's part concludes with a florid passage and final trill, again omitting the C octaves which begin the short concluding *tutti*. Like Field, Chopin in both his concertos seeks ways of amplifying the conventional concluding trill for the solo instrument, as favoured by classical composers:

Ex. 159



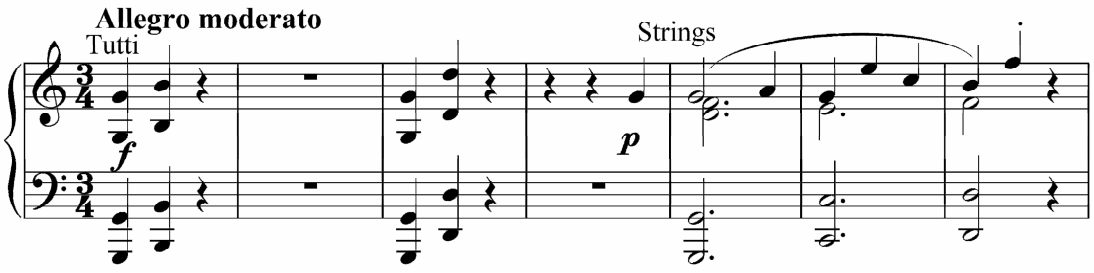
The end of this short concluding *tutti* contains a final hint of the first subject in the restrained woodwind scoring of the opening, before the whole orchestral resources bring the first movement to its close with a *forte* perfect cadence.

The experiment of introducing a slow interlude, rhythmically unrelated and with extremely tenuous melodic associations, into the first movement of a concerto was certainly a considerable innovation in 1822, and was not without its influence on Schumann, who, in 1835, had written an enthusiastic review of the concerto for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Schumann's own *Fantasie in A minor* for piano and orchestra, eventually to become the first movement of his Concerto, Op. 54, and composed six years later, contains a similar interlude, which, however, is rather more successful because of its close thematic ties with the rest of the work. It would also seem that Field's introduction of the 'slow movement' in place of the usual development section, served as a model for Liszt in the *Andante Sostenuto* central episode from his Sonata in B minor of 1853. The extremely episodic character of Field's movement is both its most original feature and its principal weakness. Notwithstanding its episodic, rather than developmental nature, and one or two uneasy corners of the kind to which the composer

was occasionally prone, it unquestionably contains Field's most firmly-directed and strongly-contrasted material. Despite this, however, it still tends to fail as a whole, and it is easy to understand the composer's difficulty in adding to it the rondo which he felt obliged to write, for reasons of convention, but which was really redundant here. Schumann, strangely enough, was particularly enthusiastic about this rondo which, as he pointed out, is really a prolonged waltz. It was probably this very fact which attracted him, fascinated as he was by the Viennese waltz rhythm, as witnessed by much of his early music, and in which rhythm the finale of his own piano concerto was to be composed. Indeed the principal melody of Field's rondo could be, and perhaps once was, one of the many little ballroom dances which he jotted down occasionally, throughout his career. Equally, a different view of the rondo can be taken, for whilst a waltz is in three-four time, so is a *Mazurka*, and many of the features which characterize a Chopin *Mazurka* and are familiar from the finale of that composer's F minor Concerto, in similar *mazurka*-like design, can be seen in this rondo by Field. Whilst the two Chopin concertos are effectively later works than Field's Seventh Concerto, a number of the former's *Mazurkas* had already been published by 1833, when the whole Field concerto was heard. Nevertheless, whatever the Chopin implications might be, Field's methods in handling his themes and the technical patterns he employs to present them, accord with the established features and practices of his style, as observed in his other concertos.

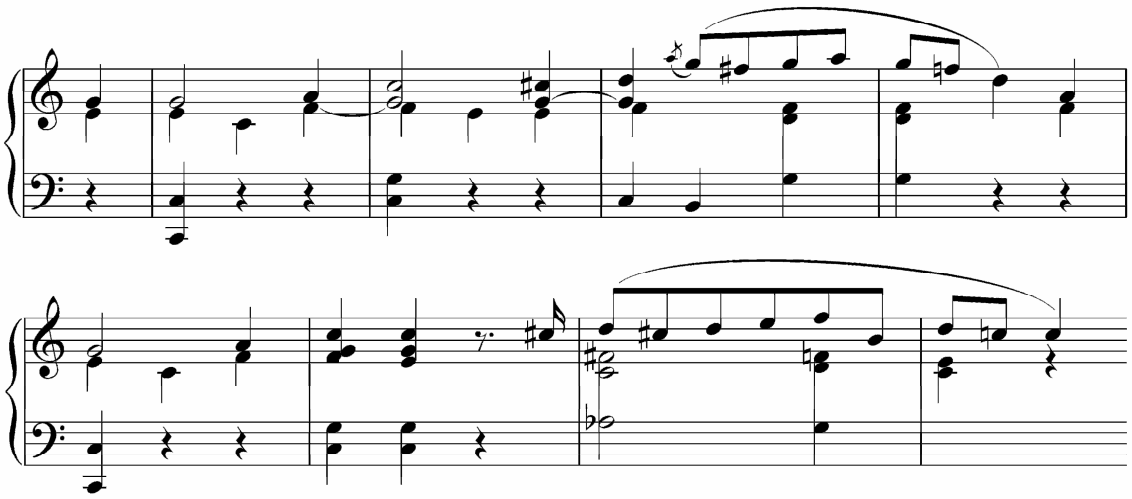
The rondo begins with an orchestral opening of sixteen bars:

Ex. 160



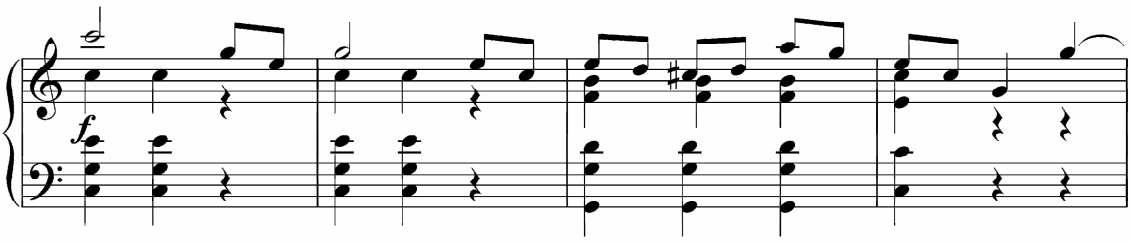
The greater part of this orchestral introduction is concerned with the wind's chromatically descending answer to the string section's opening question, over a dominant pedal which prepares for the piano's presentation of the main theme:

Ex. 161



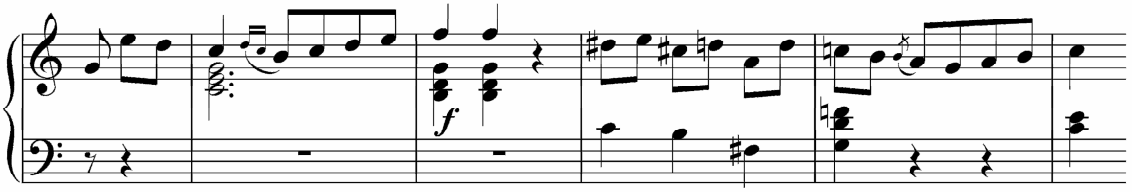
After four statements of the theme, divided by short episodes where, again, Field produces delightful effects with his limpid orchestral textures and delicate passage-work in quavers, a *tutti* follows, which has a distinct *mazurka*-like ring about it:

Ex. 162



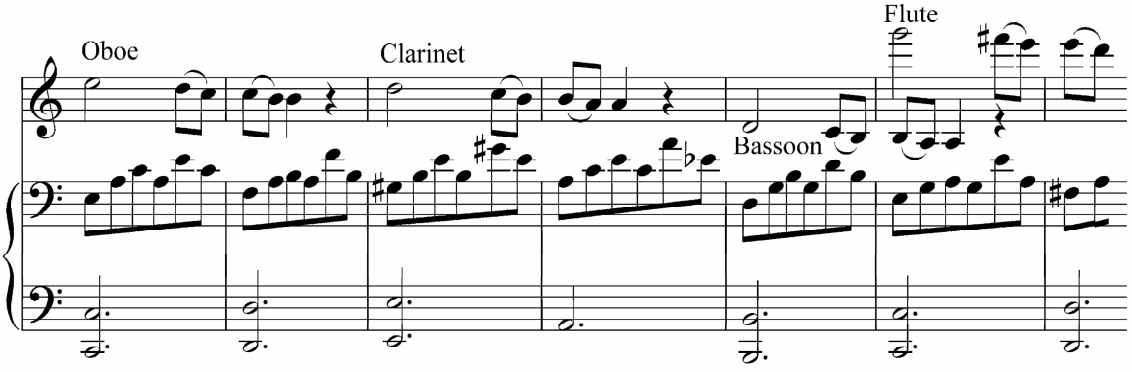
At the close of this short *tutti*, the soloist leads off with a new theme, which has a certain rustic charm:

Ex. 163



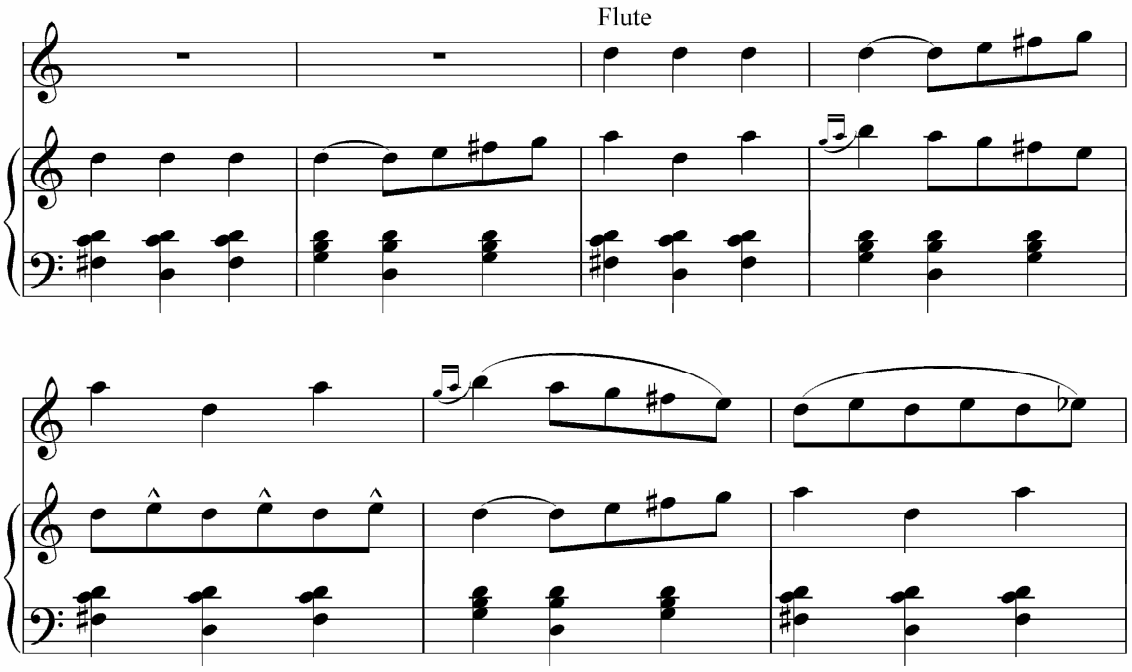
After only twelve bars, the key changes to A minor, for the first episode, where the pianist's role is initially to accompany the solo wind instruments, aided by a sustained background from the strings:

Ex. 164



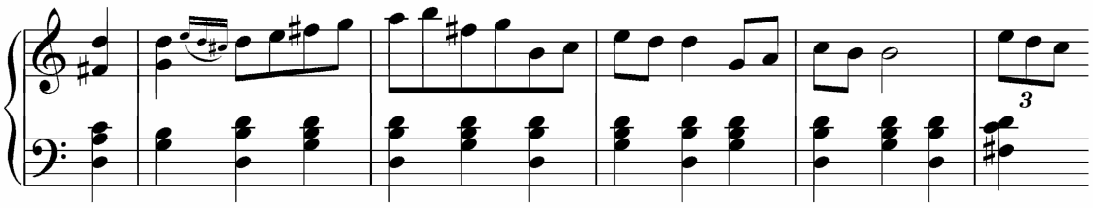
The soloist introduces a fresh melody which is treated in canon with the first flute:

Ex. 165



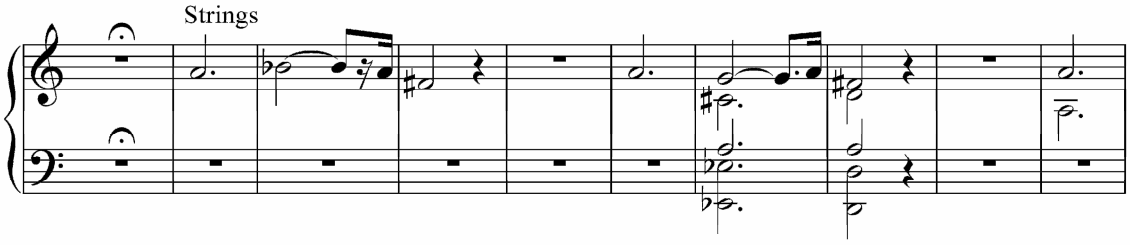
Passage-work in triplet quavers, over an implied pedal D in the chordally-accompanying left-hand piano part, some twenty-eight bars in length, leads to the soloist announcing a further theme, a development of the previous melody quoted:

Ex. 166



In this rather shapeless rondo, Field, for his first episode, begins in the relative minor, but instead of a return of the main theme, (which he had already stated four times at the beginning), proceeds straightway with a second episode in the dominant. This he concludes rather abruptly with a diminished seventh chord, followed by a bar's pause. A cryptic little passage for strings, placed, as if in parenthesis, between pauses, then ensues:

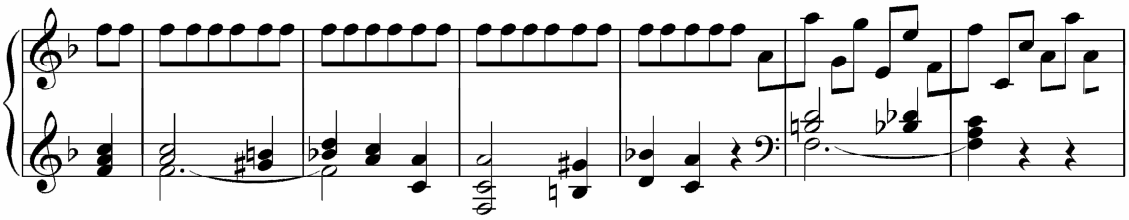
Ex. 167



This, too, ends on a *sforzando* diminished seventh chord, and is again followed by a bar's pause. The soloist returns to the previous bright spirits of the earlier G major episode, but while there is some orchestral writing of almost chamber-music quality, with its interplay of solo phrases tossed between piano and woodwind, the ensuing section is far too repetitive, and relies, almost without interruption, on tonic and dominant harmonies, as the music rather aimlessly fluctuates between G major and minor. A brief stop, in the soloist's part, marks the start of a lengthy dominant pedal, in preparation for the return of the rondo's main theme. Again, while there is some effective scoring during this twenty-seven bar pedal, such as at the beginning, where first clarinet, first bassoon and viola are used in three-part harmony, whilst the pedal G is allotted firstly to horns, cellos and basses in octaves, playing only on the second beat of bar, this resulting melodically-undistinguished section is not successful. Modern performers, on the rare occasions when this concerto is given an airing, have recognised that a little pruning could only be beneficial, and two cuts, one of forty-one bars, and another of nine, are generally made here, before the reappearance of the main rondo theme. This is introduced by the soloist, accompanied by strings, closely following the treatment earlier, in the second of the four original statements of the theme at the start of the movement. In this present case, however, the rondo theme is restated only the once, leading straightway into a *tutti* which

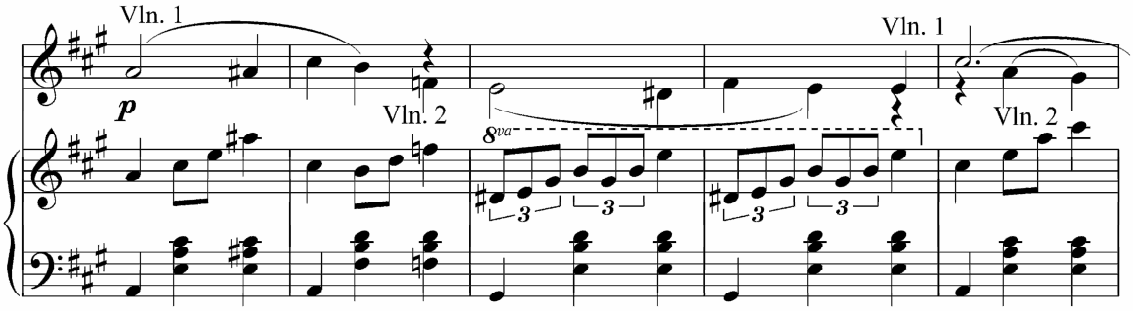
closely resembles its companion pieced, quoted earlier. The end of this *tutti* is shortened and, as the key changes to F major, there is a reference to the wind theme which answered the strings in the opening orchestral introduction to the rondo; it is scored in slightly different fashion, and is transposed into F, in which key the next episode is to begin:

Ex. 168



The first part of this episode, which again is delightfully scored with the utmost economy, mainly develops the repeated-note figure, before the broken octaves assume a more important thematic role. A brief modulatory section of eight bars introduces a new passage in A major where, initially, violins share a variant of the piano's left-hand part at the start of the F major episode, allowing the soloist to decorate this freely:

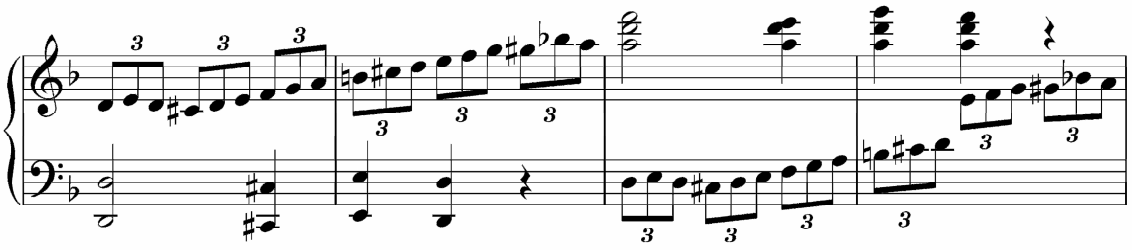
Ex. 169



The key reverts to F, as a four-bar interlude from the wind, a further reference to the movement's orchestral introduction, leads into a short, and more subdued section,

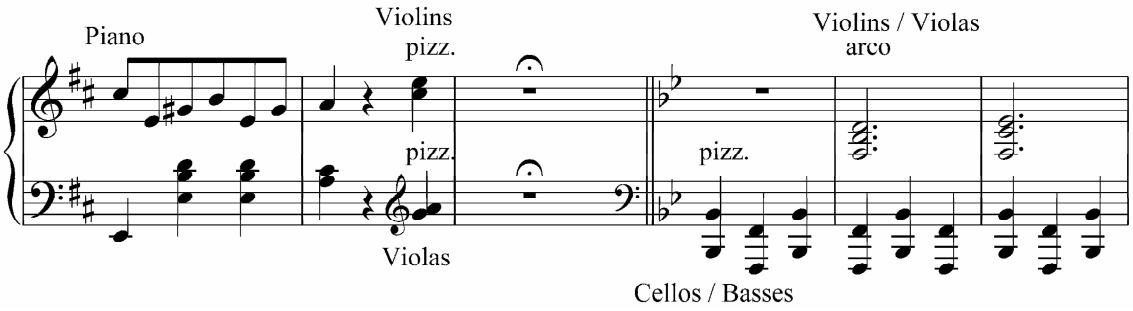
thematically related to the F major theme. The quiet, and relaxed air disappears as the soloist embarks on a further episode, which commences in D minor and certainly possesses more feeling of development than other sections in the movement. Four bars of dominant preparation from the soloist lead into this dramatic episode, which is again based on the left-hand theme of the F major episode; the piano, here, dominates the scene, with the barest of assistance from the strings:

Ex. 170



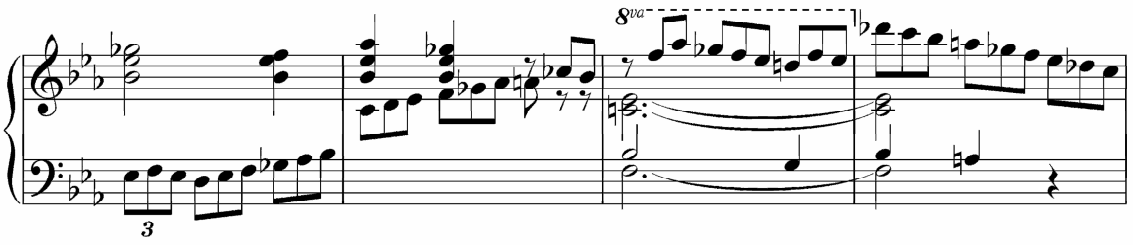
This is repeated three times, each times a fifth higher, until strings interrupt with a loud unison statement of the left-hand part, now in F sharp minor, which is answered by six gentler bars from the soloist as the key becomes D major,. Here, accompanied by strings, the piano plays a variant of the F major theme, with a simple waltz-like left-hand part. This quickly culminates in an ascending scale from the soloist, in A major, which, after top A is reached, is followed by a one-beat pause. Field then begins the previously abortive D major waltz once again, now a tone higher, and in the minor; soon, this comes to rest in A major and, with what follows, it would seem that again the composer is beginning to feel that he has got into one of those blind alleys, from which he only with great difficulty extricates himself:

Ex. 171



At this juncture, Field reintroduces, albeit briefly, a reference to the soloist's second theme of the first episode (the G major section which followed on after that episode's A minor beginning); it is now in B flat major, but very soon, a modulation to E flat is made, and this short passage of sixteen bars finishes on a half-close in this new key. To complicate matters even further, the half-close is followed not by the major key, but by a section commencing in E flat minor, based on the third and fourth bars of the earlier D minor episode (which, of course, was in turn based on the original F major theme), in which key this long and protracted part of the rondo had initially begun:

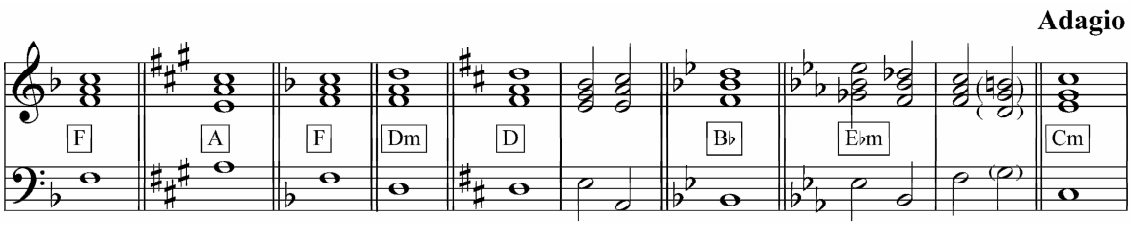
Ex. 172



As in the earlier D minor episode, sequential repetition is again the most prominent feature here, the three statements descending a fourth on each occasion. The third repetition, in F minor, is varied slightly, and leads to a half-close in C minor, into which key the final passage-work from the soloist has led – a bar's silence then ensues. Criticism has been levelled against the composer for his seeming lack of direction so far

in this episode. If, however, the tonics of the main key changes, beginning with the F major episode, are set down on paper, a logical chain of modulations can be observed. Where criticism is, perhaps, more justified, it is the links in this modulation chain, which are often weak, and could certainly be improved upon; in the following example, whole sections in a key are shown by semibreves, while internal modulations within these sections are shown by minims – the penultimate chord, in brackets, represents the dominant preparation for the return of the tonic key, which changes from minor to major in the *Adagio* to be discussed later:

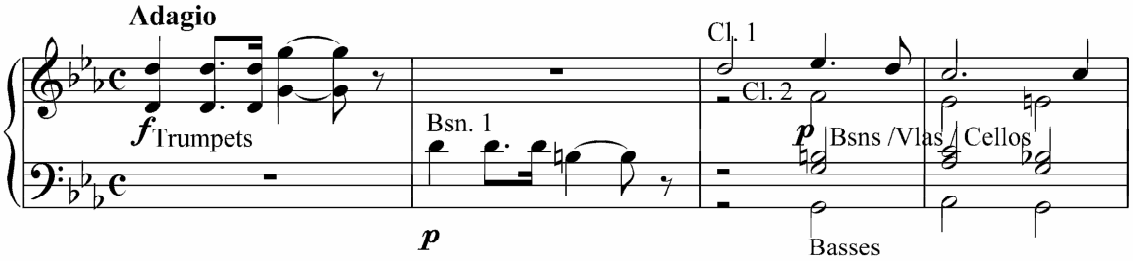
Ex. 173



Even the shift from the sub-section ending in A major to the next, a semitone higher, quoted earlier, might have gone more smoothly had the *pizzicato* chord from the upper strings been a root-position dominant seventh in the new key of B flat – the final chord from the piano would then, together with this suggested alterations, form a more successful link with A serving as tonic in the soloist's chord and leading-note in new key, in the string chord. However, returning to the point which had been reached in the movement, Field could quite easily have launched straight into the coda after a bar's silence, but again, the onward impetus is halted, as it was earlier by the rather enigmatic passage for strings. This time, as a preparation for his coda, Field interrupts the three-four time and *mazurka* rhythm with a short *Adagio* in four-four, beginning with a little three-

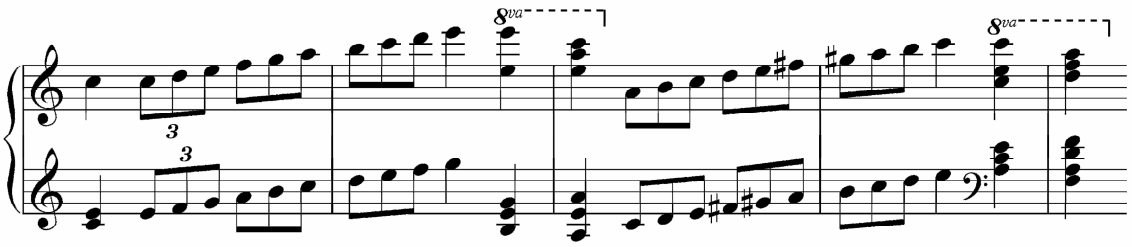
note trumpet fanfare which, at the first performance, so strangely impressed the leading Parisian music critic, Joseph-Louis d'Ortique, who likened it to a 'far-off voice floating upon the air' – it is based on a 'skipped' rhythm-pattern:

Ex. 174



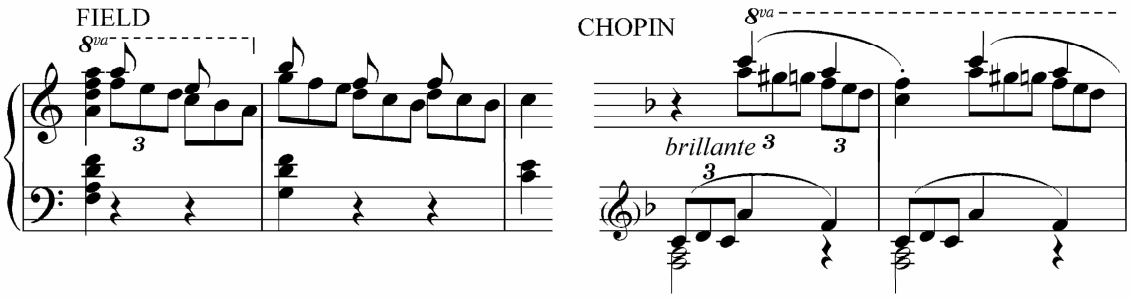
The whole fifteen-bar *Adagio* does not, however, approach the interest or expressiveness of the G major interlude in the first movement. Clearly, Field wanted to throw into relief his final section and its *bravura* passage-work for the soloist, but there seems no real reason for an *Adagio*, particularly when it is not very expressive; a pause could have done, just as well. Chopin manages this better with the repeated horn call with which he introduces the closing section in the finale of his F minor Concerto. The *Adagio* episode concludes with a diminished seventh, followed by a short pause. The soloist then launches into the coda, re-establishing the earlier tempo and characteristic triplet-quaver embellishments of the main part of the rondo, while strings sing out a more sustained version of the right-hand piano figuration. Soon, Field employs a variant of the motif consisting of a run followed by two chords, usually declamatory, which both he and Chopin made quite frequent use of – the former's *Polacca* from the Third Concerto and the latter's *Grande Polonaise Brillante* are but two examples:

Ex. 175



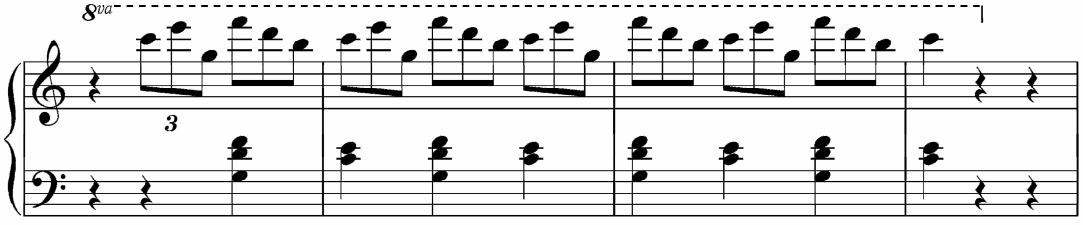
Shortly after this, the composer incorporates a technical pattern which Chopin uses in the coda of the finale of the F minor Concerto:

Ex. 176



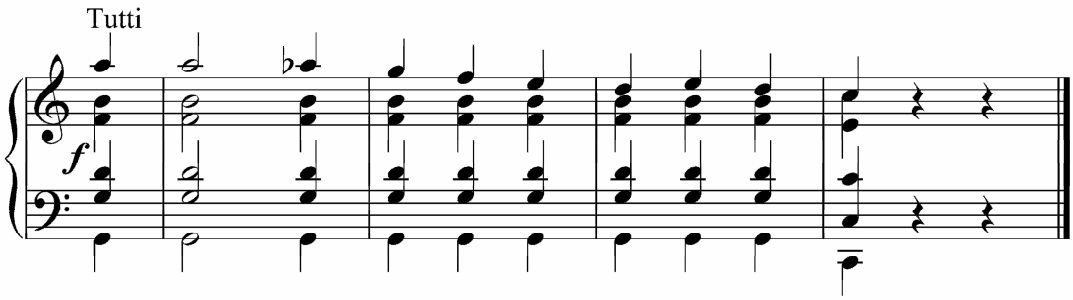
The soloist's passage-work is twice interrupted, for two bars on each occasion, as the full orchestra makes two final references to the main rondo theme, before the piano's last contribution to this concerto, with the following exuberant pattern:

Ex. 177



A four-bar *tutti*, based on a phrase first heard in the movement's introduction, then played by the wind, promptly brings Field's last piano concerto to its close:

Ex. 178



In this second movement Field seems especially unable adequately to prepare for his ideas as they succeed each other, or to develop them logically, once he has introduced them. Its disadvantage is its diffuse shape, with passages which cling too much to one key, and pauses and key-shifts that seem arbitrarily made, not dictated by any special plan, except for the suggested tenuous links mentioned earlier in connection with the episode beginning in F major. Consequently, otherwise interesting ideas and technical patterns are robbed of much of their impact. The celebrated critic, Fétis, writing in the *Revue Musicale*, described the Seventh Concerto as 'diffuse, but full of happy ideas', although here he was not being really sincere; he did not think it was really a good work for, on a later occasion, he maintained that it was quite unworthy of Field, and only redeemed by his beautiful playing of the solo part. Nevertheless, these 'happy ideas' do abound, but it is unfortunate that they should be fitted into an unsatisfactory structure, the recurring aspect which has led to so much of Field's music being forgotten and the importance of his innovations overlooked. The Seventh Concerto was an immediate success with the Parisian public – so much so that the composer was induced to repeat it at one of his recitals in Pape's salon, in February 1833, though on that occasion, he played it unaccompanied, a procedure which would appear strange to modern audiences but which was quite usual in Field's day. In fact, in 1831, Chopin had made his Parisian debut with an unaccompanied performance of his F minor Concerto, a fact which is also

occasionally taken to imply that Field might have been influenced by Chopin's finale, when he set about writing a rondo to complete the Seventh Concerto. On the contrary, Field did not attend Chopin's debut and had heard neither of Chopin's two concertos by the time the Seventh Concerto was first performed. The Seventh Concerto, however, is really not one of Field's best concertos, and, despite the affection in which it used to be held by Charles Hallé, and other contemporary pianists, it gradually fell out of fashion, an action which it probably merits rather more than several of Field's earlier essays in concerto form, such as the Second Concerto in A flat major.

Fétis's pronouncement on the Seventh Concerto is basically true for all the concertos. Field, who could devise really effective smaller modulations, was more often than not at sea when it came to managing these on a larger canvas; again and again, when the music seems to be moving somewhere, the listener is upset by trite cadences and too-frequent returns to the basic key, by suddenly-curtailed melodic-lines, and unmistakable signs of his not knowing where to go next. It is to his great detriment that a series of 'happy ideas', often highly original ones, cannot alone make a convincing larger work – a sense of development and a greater appreciation of form are such an essential ingredient here.

Whilst the main thesis of this present study is not to compare the work and achievement of Field with that of Chopin, it is difficult not to draw certain parallels between these two composers, whose names are, in fact, so often linked in the context of the *Nocturne*. Chopin's superiority in terms of form is easily seen: though a considerable number of his technical devices and turns of phrase, rhythms and sonorities, and indeed the actual way he used the keyboard, came from Field, he had a strong, if personally

distinctive, sense of internal structure. Traditionally, Chopin's use of the orchestra is frequently a source of criticism on account of its supposed dullness, only occasionally relieved, as same writers point out, by such saving-graces as a positively original use of the bassoon! Again, whilst an argument either for, or against, the effectiveness of Chopin's orchestration is beyond the remit of this study, it is felt that his use of the orchestra, far from being the embarrassment some commentators have claimed it to be, the same commentators, incidentally, responsible for the vicious and unnecessary cuts such as are often made in *tutti* passages in the F minor Concerto, is always apt and sensitive – his use of the bassoon is only one instance in which his scoring can be quite original. Though Field's sense of the orchestra was far greater than Chopin's, and full and imaginative orchestral parts abound, rather than occur sporadically, Chopin's two concertos still tend to emerge as more satisfactory, through the completeness of their piano parts, and so remain in regular performance. In the concertos of Chopin, the soloist, having once entered, says everything, and with complete confidence, whereas in those of Field, both piano and orchestra share in the all-too-frequent musical lack of direction.

Field's concertos need reshaping in as much as the structural balance has to be achieved without sacrificing any of the freshness and originality of the ideas. Simple cuts would be a step in the right direction but, to be totally effective, surgery of the highest order may be the only definitive answer. Opposing editions show considerable variation in passages and contain suggestions for cuts of various lengths, revealing that even the composer was often none-too-certain of a movement's optimum design. Indeed, Field made solo versions of a number of movements from the concertos, probably not merely for the contemporary performance practice without orchestral accompaniment, but also to

try to achieve in them, a more balanced formal structure. In shortening the longer movements, he usually made them more shapely, while sometimes sacrificing particularly telling ideas, such as the theme of the six-eight section in the rondo of the Fifth Concerto, which contained melodic elements of considerable charm, and the effectively-written episode in G flat in the *Polacca* of the Third Concerto, when constructing the *Polonaise en Rondeau*, mentioned in that context.

It is a great pity, nevertheless, that Field's output in the concerto form is nowadays represented in a restricted way in terms of available scores and performances. Whilst, at this juncture, the scores of the first three concertos are still obtainable, and the Second Concerto can certainly still command respect in the concert hall, the main bulk of his concerto-output can only be studied, with some difficulty. Despite the imperfections of the last four concertos, they contain much which is novel and forward-looking for its time and, were they more widely known, might certainly demand a reappraisal of Field's contribution to musical history. It is no surprise that, on the basis of his *Nocturnes* and the first three concertos, his frequently-applied title of 'inventor of the *Nocturne*' mentioned earlier in this study, is his only claim to fame. When, however, the first three concertos are placed in their real context, as exhibiting a true line of development which culminated in the often experimental devices of the later works, then can Field's more important position in the early development of romantic piano-writing and the romantic piano-concerto form be assessed, with a completeness which must otherwise be lacking.

FIELD AND THE PIANO

It is clear from contemporary reports that, by 1830, Field had become a legend, and that his superiority among pianists was so generally recognised that he was usually regarded as a leader of his profession by such eminent names as Elsner, Wieck, Kalkbrenner and Chopin; however, their appraisal of Field's pianistic status was, at that juncture, based on the immense fame he had acquired throughout Europe, and that, without having been obliged to leave Russia where he was idolised – none of them had actually heard him play. The publication of his concertos, as well as his *Nocturnes* by *Breitkopf & Härtel*, which began about 1815, supported his already brilliant reputation as a pianist: these works quickly became an essential part of the repertoire.

Field's art represented a new pianistic ideal, possibly enhanced somewhat by the fact that to hear him remained only a dream for most musicians, and the consequent glamour, which always surrounds a legendary figure, increased his influence even more. Despite the tendency to exaggerate, especially by those who had made the journey to Russia to hear Field play, such a reputation was certainly well earned; only to study the many detailed descriptions of his playing left by his pupils, colleagues, and by such esteemed musicians as Spohr, Hummel and Glinka, is to be made so readily aware that Field was a pianist of unique quality. Even at the beginning of his career, he was recognised as having outstanding ability or, as the *Morning Post* in 1799 put it, he was 'one of the best performers in the kingdom'. It must be said, however, that contemporary reports tended to praise his facility and technical prowess, making no mention, at that time, of the poetic quality of his mature style, which accounted for Field's true position, because of its strikingly individual nature, in the subsequent history of piano-playing.

Louis Spohr, in his autobiography, is the first person to draw attention, on paper, to the most important aspect of Field's playing, neglected in earlier reports. Whilst Spohr mentions the young pianist's technical fluency, he goes on to write: '…the dreamy perfection of his execution. As soon as his touching performance began one forgot everything and became all ear'. Here, at last, is seen emerging the individual voice of the romantic keyboard player, *The Singer among Pianists*, from the most accomplished pupil of the greatest teacher of the day. From this time onwards, all accounts of Field's playing praise its poetry, and the beautiful *cantabile* quality of his tone, even more than his obvious technical facility. Other great pianists have been eulogised for this precious singing quality, but none more frequently or more fervently than Field – even singers were advised to listen to his piano-playing, so that their performances might be enriched. Obviously, a degree of hyperbole is evident in some accounts, but it is still possible to arrive at what were the essential characteristics of his art.

Its technical perfection, though never an end in itself, was a very important aspect of it, and this he of course owed to the rigorous training of Clementi. Towards the end of his career, Field was regarded as the upholder of a great classical tradition of piano-playing. This tradition, which he shared with Cramer, and had received from Clementi and Dussek, was, above all else, one of restraint. This accounts for the unprecedented addition of a second piano for the *L'Orage* section of the Fifth Concerto – he would not allow one single instrument to be pounded, just to enable it to compete with the might of the full orchestra. In his playing, everything must be made to seem easy, however difficult it might really be. To this end, Field practised special exercises each day, often with a coin balanced on the back of his hand to ensure a quiet style and avoid all hasty

movements. This latter trick was part of Clementi's training and, in fact, remained in use for many years. Field regarded the key as an extension of the finger, and what he abominated was a percussive attack on the keyboard itself. Naturally, in achieving his rounded, unforced singing-tone and marvellous agility, Field was very dependent on the character of the pianos of his time. Early nineteenth-century pianos differ almost as much from those of today as from the harpsichords and clavichords which they gradually replaced. Their pure, transparent tone and, above all, their relatively easy action made the pianist's task something quite different from what it was to become after the changes which were forced on piano-makers by the next generation of virtuosi – Liszt, Thalberg and their followers. Equally, the interpretation of Field's pedalling marks is greatly affected by this difference between early and modern instruments, and will be discussed later. Field used Clementi's pianos in his youth, and sometimes those of Broadwood, but in later years his particular favourites were the instruments made by Tischner – a Prussian who emigrated to Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth century and opened a successful piano factory which, however, went into liquidation on his death in 1830. Tischner's grand pianos are now very rare, but the best surviving instruments are still ideally suited to Field's style of playing. Their sweet, silvery tone and immediate response to infinitely small gradations of touch are exactly what Field's music demands.

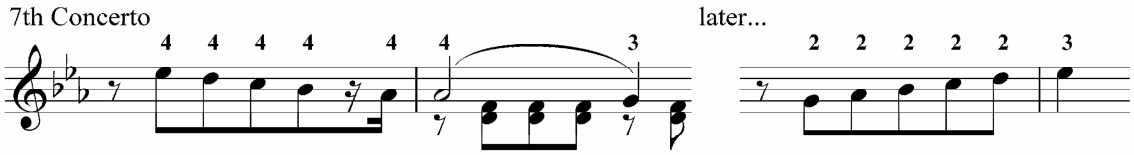
TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS – FINGERING – *CANTILENA* – PEDALLING

Whilst many specific technical features of Field's piano-writing have already been discussed, in connection with the individual analyses of the seven concertos, there are certain areas which demand further consideration. One area in which Field was

particularly original, was in his manner of fingering; indeed, it is quite apparent that for Field, fingering was of primary importance. For, whilst the composer's manuscripts are not very abundant, those that still remain, even preliminary sketches, have the fingering written besides the notes. Many copies of his concertos, edited by the composer for the benefit of his pupils, still exist; they are liberally fingered, and ornaments and trills are, in fact, written out in full, with fingering for every note. Field's favourite pupil, Alexander Dubuk, feeling that a great deal could be learned from these copies, published a collection of eighty-eight fingered passages taken from his master's works, mostly the concertos. They contain much that is unorthodox, and a study of them shows that many of Chopin's fingerings, long regarded as without precedent, were anticipated by Field. Various important instances from the concertos may be cited:

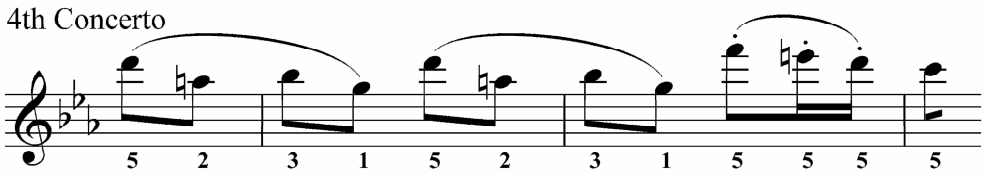
Passages in which a rich, bell-like sonority is required, may be played by the same finger throughout:

Ex. 179



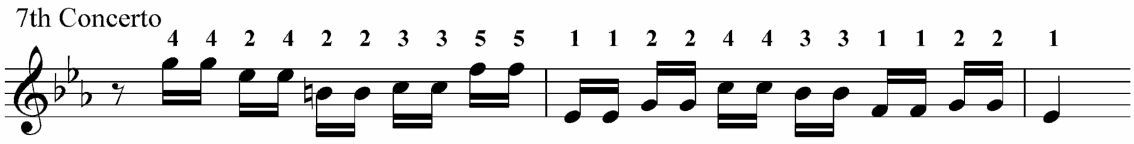
This type of fingering may also be used for light, *staccato* effects:

Ex. 180



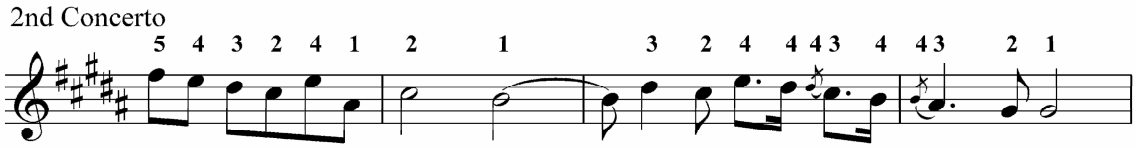
Quick repetitions may also be played by the same finger:

Ex. 181



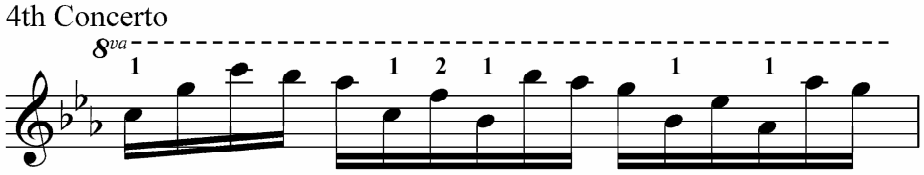
Field, too, has no objection to the use of the thumb on black keys. He sometimes deliberately places the hand near the centre, or towards the back of the keyboard, even when more 'traditional' alternatives existed:

Ex. 182



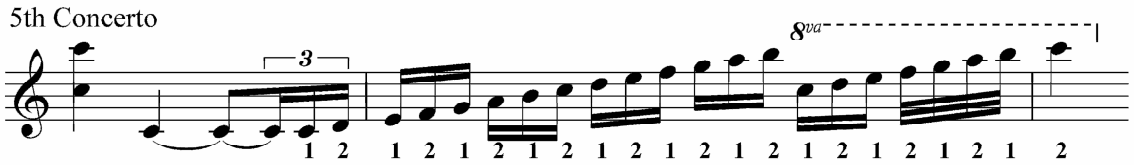
Often, the type of figuration necessitates the use of the thumb on black keys:

Ex. 183



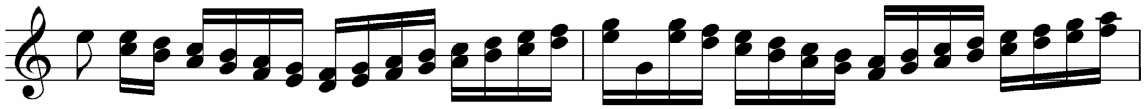
Incidentally, the previous quotation exemplifies the use which Field made, on so many occasions, of the sparkling quality of the piano's high register in his passage-work, which, in itself, occasionally includes curiosities of fingering such as the following scale passage:

Ex. 184



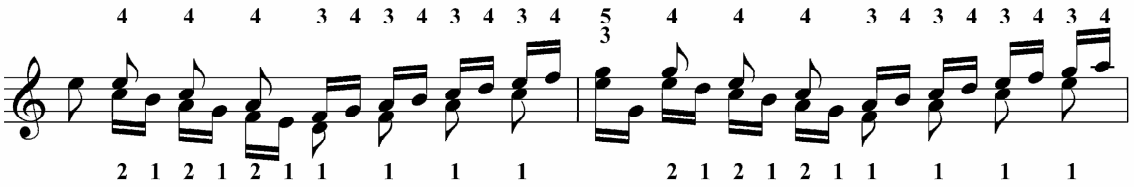
A surprising fact emerges in connection with scales in double notes; Field, the favourite pupil of Clementi who had great skill in such scales, apparently had no special facility himself in this type of passage. Rapid passages in thirds are extremely rare in Field's music, and scales in sixths and octaves non-existent. The scale-passages in thirds, quoted in the discussion on the Seventh Concerto (Ex. 152), show how the composer, with the aid of the dotted rhythms, manages to avoid the type of passage which occurs in Hummel's A minor Concerto:

Ex. 185



Field was in the habit of making the following changes to the previous passage:

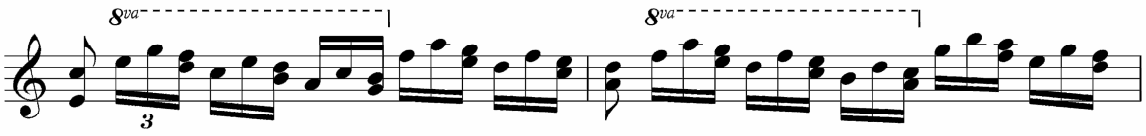
Ex. 186



As is often the case, the necessity of having to develop an existing form, in this instance because of a lack of facility, sometimes promotes the discovery of something new, and something with far more developmental possibilities. Seen in this light, for example, Schumann's self-inflicted injury, whilst curtailing his career as a pianist, closed one door,

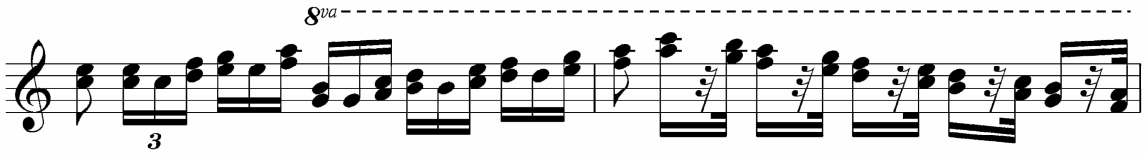
only to open another of more far-reaching effect, in which his true gift as a composer would be fully realised. In Field's case, the new, and forward-looking figuration in the Fifth Concerto can be seen as a direct consequence of the 'simplification' which he made in such double-third passages:

Ex. 187



and, from the same movement:

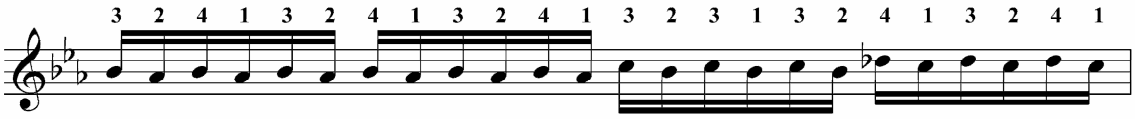
Ex. 188



The question of Field's facility in the matter of trills was raised by a report which Schumann made of a certain *Exercice Nouveau* which Field had earlier written, designed for the development of trills with the third and fourth fingers. Schumann, in his review, talks about trills, 'which were not the strongest aspect of Field's virtuosity'. Again, this judgement on Field's playing was probably based on third-hand experience; Wieck, Schumann's teacher, was most likely the main source of information, and he had not actually heard Field in person! An accurate knowledge of Field's trill technique can only be based on the passages which he wrote out and fingered for his pupils. The following such example, from the Third Concerto, indicates that his trills were not particularly

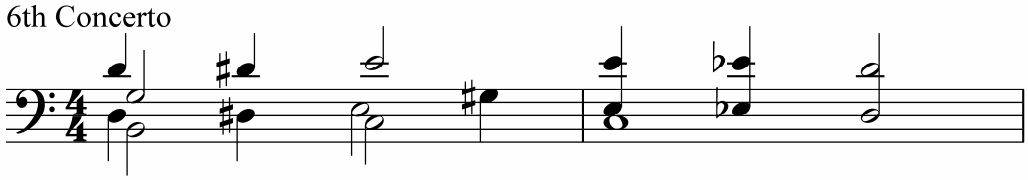
rapid, and were played with frequent changes of finger – it was earlier quoted in full (Ex. 47) because of Field's unusual chord progressions:

Ex. 189



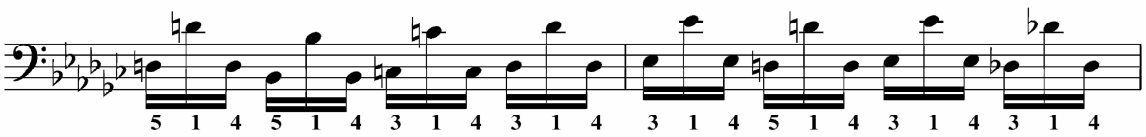
All the fingering technicalities quoted thus far, are for the right hand only because, as can be seen even from the concertos alone, the left hand is seldom submitted by the composer to any very testing difficulties. Its role is usually to support the right hand with accompaniment figures, or to follow its lead in scale-passages in thirds, sixths or octaves. In these accompanying contexts, the left hand is, on occasions extended – more difficult to reproduce accurately on a modern instrument, unless arpeggiated, or performed by a player with a 1eft hand of Rachmaninov proportions:

Ex. 190



Apart from the occasional use of running-basses, such as in the rondo of Second Concerto, passages like the following, from the rondo of the Fourth Concerto, which are long and tiring, are rare in Field's concerto-output – the composer fingered such broken octaves as follows:

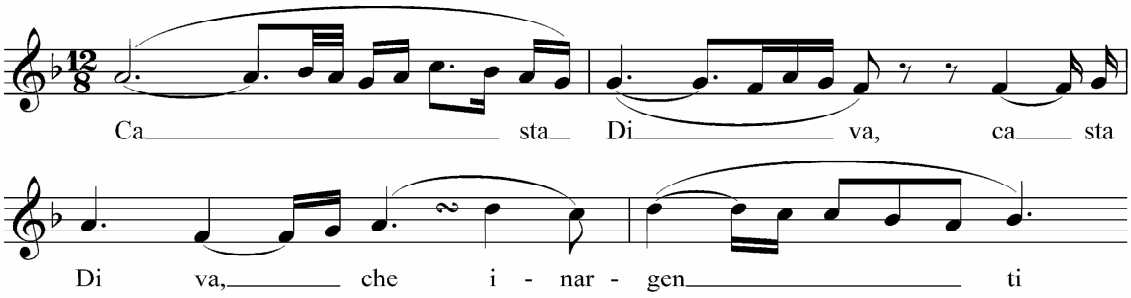
Ex. 191



For the most part, however, Field requires no more of the left hand than the provision of an effective background for the right hand's *bravura* or *cantabile*.

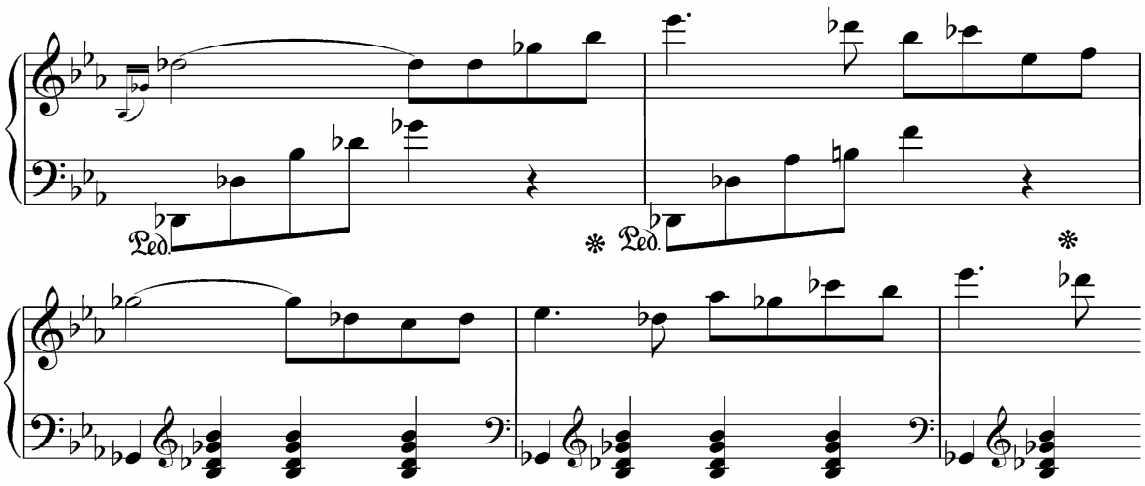
It has often been postulated that Chopin's *cantabile* melodies and flowing basses as, for example, in his *Nocturnes*, stemmed from the Italian operas of Bellini and other contemporary operatic composers, exemplified stylistically in the well-known aria *Casta Diva* from Bellini's *Norma*:

Ex. 192



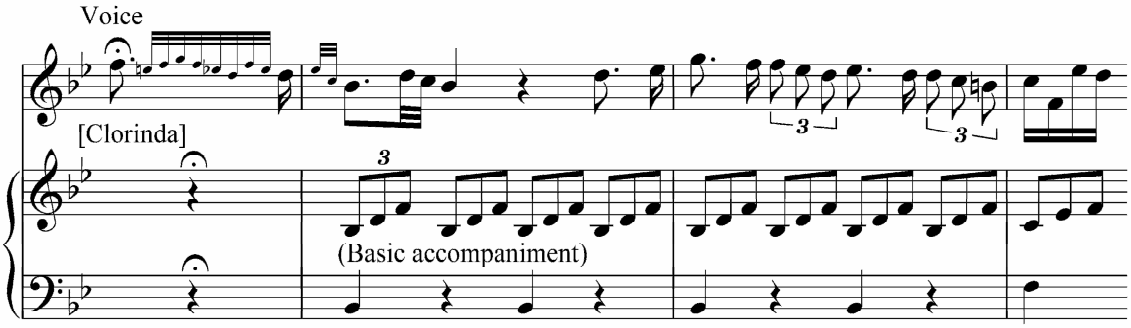
There is, though, no reason why this should be so, when Field's music already exhibited these characteristics in keyboard form:

Ex. 193



Field had made this transmutation in terms of the keyboard – singing *cantilena* on the piano – from the time when, in Russia in the early eighteen-hundreds, he visited performances of Italian opera, then a fashionable form of entertainment for the nobility amongst whom he had many friends. Naturally, whilst accepting this operatic influence on Field, music generally was taking a more romantic course and, in the case of a keyboard composer, the increased expressive possibilities of the piano would have themselves engendered this more flowing, and more expansive type of melody-writing to some noticeable degree. In terms of actual composers, six of Field's seven concertos with, from the second onwards, their similar use of embellished and *cantabile* melodies, were in print before Bellini's first opera was heard, and also, up to and including the Fifth Concerto, before Donizetti's first. Thus, if Field were to be adaptor and not originator, it would be from earlier opera composers, rather than from these last two mentioned. Such a composer as Rossini seems a good candidate, for he was born ten years after Field, and his first opera was produced in Bologna, in 1810. His *cantilena* melodies were less rich than those of Donizetti and Bellini, and also of Field, but equally, tended to be more florid, as this extract from *La Cenerentola* demonstrates:

Ex. 194



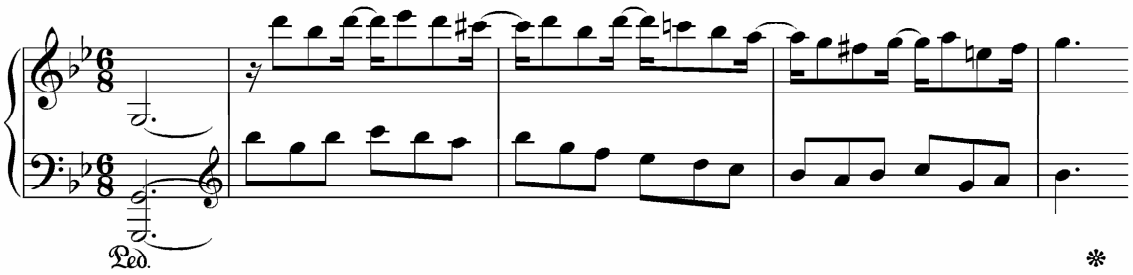
Even now, Field would have had but one year or less to have heard Rossini's earlier operas and have translated some of their aspects into pianistic terms by the time he was working on the Second Concerto's first movement. Nevertheless, the link between Field and Rossini, though extremely tenuous, may just be a possibility. It could be suggested that Field's characteristic use of 'skipped' rhythm-patterns, his fondness for the 'bell' motif, his clean and clear orchestral textures, his use, in the Fourth and Sixth Concertos, of a mediant relationship for their slow movements (although this was quite noticeable amongst the early romantic composers), all originated in the works of Rossini. Field, of course, also heard works by earlier composers, such as Martín y Soler and the operas by Rossini would have made a memorable climax to the lines of development from these earlier Italian operas. Indeed, Field's *Fantasia an a theme of Martini*, Op. 3 (the only work, along with the Sonatas, Op. 1, to which he allotted an opus number, the identity of Op. 2 being still unknown) is based not on a theme by Martini, but on one by Martín y Soler: it is an air from the opera *La Scuola dei Maritati*, which was produced in St Petersburg in 1794. In spite of the decline of Russian interest in Italian opera in favour of the French variety, which took place from about 1801, this operatic 'hit' retained its popularity in St Petersburg during the first years of the nineteenth century. The link

between Chopin and Bellini might equally have been a two-fold one: Rossini—Field and Field—Chopin, naturally accepting that the latter two composers are far more closely associated. One of the main areas of difficultly, and one which, to some considerable degree, might account for the somewhat relatively unimportant position Field holds in areas such as keyboard style or influences on later composers, is the general unavailability, in print, of many of Field's works, especially the larger canvasses like the later concertos.

Field's music depends more than that of any earlier composer on the special tone colour produced by the almost constant use of what is now referred to as the 'sustaining pedal' – as Liszt later said: 'Without the pedal the piano is only a dulcimer' . Field used the left pedal very sparingly and, according to Dubuk, he never used it for achieving a *pianissimo*, but only to produce a special timbre as, for example, in the development section of the Sixth Concerto's first movement, where Field introduces a new theme with its strongly Schubertian melodic-line. In Field's few extant manuscripts, the pedalling is usually marked in full, but in the early editions of his works indications of pedalling are sparse, and often so carelessly printed that they can be regarded only as a very rough guide to the composer's intentions. When Field's pedalling is investigated, it soon becomes clear that it is not possible to reproduce exactly on modern instruments all the pedal effects available on those of his time – subsequent developments in piano-making have been too numerous, and too fundamental, during the last two hundred years or so. The opening of the *Siciliano in G minor* from the Fourth Concerto (solo version) is a striking example of the telling effect obtained when the pedal is held throughout a succession of changing harmonies. Played on an early nineteenth-century grand, this

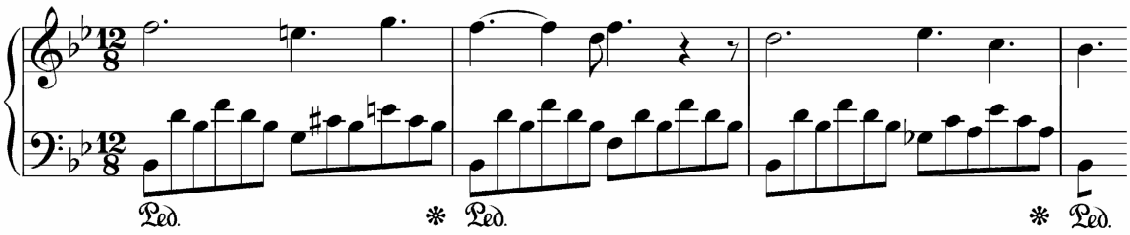
passage would sound entirely convincing, but, like many similar passages in Field's works, it cannot be played in exactly the same way on a modern piano, without sounding too blurred to be wholly effective:

Ex. 195



On the other hand, whilst allowing for the more limited sonority of early nineteenth-century pianos, it would appear probable that Field, on occasions, positively preferred a slight haze of pedalled tone to the 'clean' harmonies for which the well-trained modern pianist strives. This is, of course, a consequence of one of Field's commonest technical devices – his use of 'pedal points'. The sound of an implied 'pedal' was intended not to be lost, regardless of phrasing and changes of harmony. The Fifth *Nocturne* is probably one of the best known of Field's compositions, perhaps because it seems to be the easiest to play. Yet the performer, whether a young student, playing Field for the first time, or a seasoned concert-pianist, finds the pedalling most difficult, for the very reason of the composer's implied tonic pedal:

Ex. 196



On the rare occasions when Field wished to ensure that the sustaining pedal should not be used, he clearly marked the passage *con sordini*, as was conventional usage in his day; such indications are, however, very few. In the Third Concerto, for example, the only time this instruction is used is, in fact, at the opening of the *Polacca*, but even here, it appears in the piano reduction of the opening eight-bar orchestral introduction, and not as part of the actual solo-writing.

The modern player who wishes to interpret Field's *Nocturnes* or his Concertos or, for that matter, any music composed before 1840, is thus faced with problems to which no really satisfactory solution exists at present. However, it is still important to know that the quality of sound with which Field enthralled his audiences has been lost, and that the perfection of his finger-technique was closely associated with the types of piano-action in use during his time: it is also absolutely essential to have an understanding of the pedalling problems mentioned above.

Whilst it has already been suggested that the absence in print of some of Field's works, notably the larger ones, might account for the rather non-influential position which the composer is allotted, Field's actual ability to impart, to his pupils, the secrets of his keyboard technique tended to be somewhat variable. Field's main teaching method was by illustration; he would rarely explain the form of a composition, leaving this to the pupil to discover who, when sufficiently aware of the main structural features himself,

would then receive the necessary motivation from the deeper insight into that composition which Field's own rendition would subsequently provide. Naturally, this pedagogic method was suitable only for those pupils who already had a good musical training and, while he would have had a number of such pupils who interested him, probably the greater part of his teaching was no more to him than mere drudgery. This was because Field, like most fashionable teachers of his day, depended very largely on the patronage of the wealthy. He accepted pupils more often for their ability to pay his high fees, than for their talent, and numerous anecdotes exist which tend to confirm that he did not appear to have been over-conscientious about the lessons of his ungifted, although rich, pupils. To his talented pupils he gave his full attention, ever scrupulous about fingering, extremely critical of the use of force in tone-production, and prepared, on occasions, laboriously to write out technical exercises. The actual number of serious students trained by Field is smaller than might be supposed, in view of his long and illustrious career; it includes, however, some important names, among them Dubuk and Villoing, from whom stems the great tradition of Russian piano-playing, which has continued unbroken to the present day. Also numbered among his pupils were such names as Verstovsky, Gurilyev, Alabyev and Glinka, important figures in early Russian musical history.

It must be assumed that, to all intents and purposes, Field was not a teacher by vocation; most of his failings, though possibly not the unfortunate effect of his fatigue and boredom caused by having to suffer ungifted and dull pupils, were swept aside by his own fine playing and engaging personality. In any case, his reputation owed very little to his teaching ability and, in fact, even the originality of his compositions, with their

individual romantic charm, could only, to a very small degree, be considered as instrumental in securing Field's then highly-revered position. It was as a pianist that he was incomparable, for he was able to reveal beauties of sound unheard before his time, and he constantly strove for, and attained many pianistic innovations during his lifetime. It is no surprise that one of his most celebrated pupils, Anton Kontski, said of Field that 'he achieved the impossible'.

It is a sad fact that, as Dubuk put it, when concluding his memories of Field, 'the tragedy of all great pianists (is) that their art died with them'. Piano-rolls and subsequent disc or tape-recordings have now, for many years, obviated the 'great tragedy' to which Dubuk referred. However, because of the vivid descriptions, which can still be read, of Field's art, it is not too hard for the modern listener or pianist to imagine that poetic, singing quality which is the hallmark of all Field's best, and most characteristic music. Indeed, it was in this way that Wieck and Schumann, to name but a few, were able, so lucidly, to appraise Field's playing on such intimate terms, without ever having had the opportunity to hear him.

FIELD AND THE ORCHESTRA

It has already been mentioned that Field has shown, throughout the seven concertos, that he possessed a sensitive ear for orchestral effects and texture. Whilst the solo piano has, to all intents, the main message in each of these works, rarely is the orchestra relegated to a menial position, where its inclusion, in performance, neither enhances, nor detracts from the solo piano part. In fact, in the last concerto, there is considerably more give-and-take between soloist and orchestra, and, if the projected eighth concerto of 1835, which some sources mention, though with little substantial evidence, was ever to come to light, it might be conjectured that this concerto could exhibit an even greater parity between the two forces. One of the most apparent features in Field's orchestration is the economic use which he makes of fairly full resources. The delicate use of solo wind instruments, frequently in the upper note-range, and often in counterpoint to the piano, makes their contribution discreet, though nevertheless vital. Also, when Field does reduce the orchestra merely to accompanying the soloist, he aims for considerable rhythmic diversity in these accompanying figures, and has an innate ability to sense when a figure or texture needs varying; not always, unfortunately, did this equally apply to his harmonic usage. The use of pedal-points has frequently been cited in the earlier discussions on the individual concertos – in fact, it is one of the composer's favourite technical devices throughout his works. Consequently, Field would be very aware that changes of texture, tone-colour, and a constantly varied rhythmic pattern applied to such pedal-points, were all of the utmost importance to avoid otherwise lengthy sections which could, all too easily, become monotonous.

Field's position as an innovator in the orchestral sphere rests on the fact that he introduced a second piano in the 'Storm' section from the Fifth Concerto; by comparison with the novel effects of his piano-writing, his scoring for orchestra would naturally be somewhat ordinary, though still apt and effective, and showing the composer as being fully informed about contemporary trends in orchestral technique. Throughout the seven concertos, Field basically retains the same orchestral resources, except for certain additions and subtractions which he makes in the woodwind department, and for the use of a bass trombone from the Fifth Concerto onwards. The extra percussion in *L'Orage* has already received mention.

STRINGS

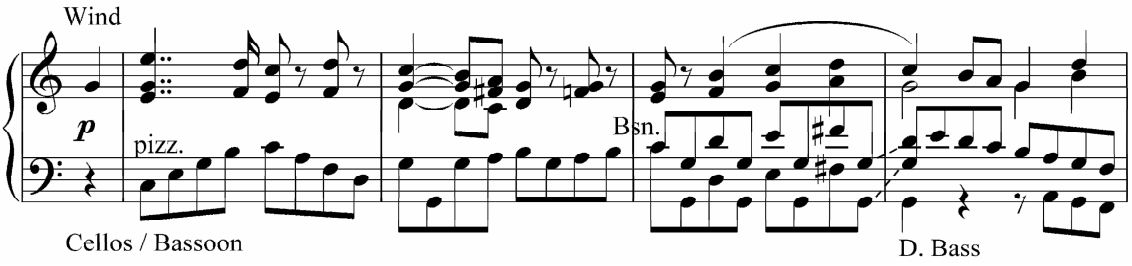
The string section naturally forms the backbone of Field's orchestration, as indeed it does in the works of his contemporaries. Already a fully-developed family, it was equally at home, whether employed in an accompanying role, or when introducing important thematic material; its wide range was in no way hampered by the severe limitations under which the brass suffered or, to a much lesser degree the then-developing woodwind. Field, like Mozart and Mendelssohn, had studied the violin and, in common with them, often played string quartets mainly for relaxation; in their respective quartet-playing sessions, all three composers incidentally preferred to take the viola part. Field's string-writing is consequently idiomatic and effective in performance and, whilst cellos and basses are often doubling, there are occasions where an effective use of cellos, either as the bass of a string quartet (opening of Fourth Concerto) or as an independent melodic-line (slow movement of Second Concerto) makes a welcome change from the otherwise sixteen-foot tone of the double basses. In Field's First Concerto, the bass-line is virtually

doubled throughout, in the same way as in Beethoven's First Piano Concerto, with which it is almost exactly contemporary. At this point of time, both composers were somewhat conservative in this matter, when a comparison is made with Mozart's 'Paris' Symphony (1778), some twenty years earlier. Here, the bass of cellos only is freely contrasted with double-bass tone. Another feature which Mozart's symphony exhibits is that the string section plays in various permutations, in unison, in two, three, four, or five parts, with violas either assigned to upper or lower parts, and sometimes independent. In Beethoven's concerto this tendency can be noticed to some degree, whereas Field writes almost exclusively in four real parts throughout the First Concerto. However, the instruction to play *sul ponticello* at the start of this concerto's rondo was by no means standard usage at the end of the eighteenth century. It was only the immediate successors of Beethoven, Weber, and Rossini who found the string orchestra in a state of technical flexibility, greatly in advance of the standard prevailing at the very beginning of the century. Further upward extension of the compass of the violin and cello parts, passage-work and figuration, more varied in pattern, and more chromatic in nature, unmeasured *tremolo*, *sul ponticello* and *col legno*, the effects of high divided violins, or of the lower string voices as separate colour-groups, all these are features in the scores which show the growing resources of the string orchestra in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, after Field had written all but the rondo to his last concerto.

In general, Field's writing for strings is always idiomatic and, if he did not aim for innovation, his scoring is certainly efficient and, though conservative, compares favourably with that of his contemporaries. His writing for the viola, especially in the Seventh Concerto, shows the composer allotting to this instrument independent and

important parts, a tendency which is more and more in evidence from the Fourth Concerto onwards. A very important feature in the growth of orchestration at this period was due to the increased use of the cello as an independent voice, and this, too, is noticeable in Field's scores as early as the Second Concerto, more so in the Fifth, as well as in such passages as the end of the first movement of the Sixth Concerto, where it shares an important line with solo bassoon, supporting the final statement of the main theme played by the wind:

Ex. 197



Throughout the concertos, Field favours measured *tremolos*, such as in the G minor episode in the development of the first movement of the Seventh Concerto, rather than genuine bow-*tremolo*, the repetition of notes at such great and irregular speed that the effect is that of a continuous buzz, without any suggestion of rhythmical reiteration – a feature which became common in the operatic scores of the period. In any case, real finger-*tremolo* had not established itself until after Field's last concerto, even if occasional scores, generally operatic, included a few examples. Mendelssohn's First Concerto, which received its first performance a year earlier than Field's Seventh, contains, in the slow movement, not only fingered-*tremolo*, but also strings subdivided into eight parts. This latter usage evolved from his rather thicker harmonic texture in his string work and, in general, his string-writing was far in advance of Field's, in such

matters as often dividing the cellos, so as to pack the harmony notes close together in the lower register, whilst still being able to treat the strings lightly, gracefully or brilliantly, as the occasion required. In Field's First Concerto, basses are written down to bottom C, a practice which is to be found in the scores of practically all composers. Basses, during the period in which the seven concertos were written, generally were of the now obsolete three-string variety, and whilst these lower notes appeared in Beethoven's scores, their use, then, is even more remarkable as the lowest string of the three-string bass was tuned to A or G above the E of the modern four-string instrument. The Italian four-string bass (fourth string tuned to bottom D) could, with *scordatura*, accommodate the demands of such extensions to the instrument's compass, or else the player simply would play an octave higher what lies below his range, trusting, no doubt, that the change of octave matters little at such low pitches, especially when the change is covered by doubling in the cellos. Modern performances of the concertos would, of course, not be restricted by these limitations, when the use of the C-extension is relatively widespread.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, string parts were freely subdivided, generally simply in order to provide that more notes should be sounded simultaneously, rather than for the sake of securing varied or particular shades of tone-colour – this latter usage being rare at that juncture, and seen, for example, in Weber's dramatic scores. Field does not subdivide his strings during the concertos, and his frequent use of double-stopping, the *pizzicato* effects, and muted strings are only typical of features which occur constantly in early nineteenth-century orchestration, and were by no means innovations. The use of *sul ponticello*, which appears again in the Fourth Concerto, could, in no way, lay claim to Field's string-writing being assessed as anything more than idiomatically

effective, functional, yet basically non-progressive in outlook. It forms a good, solid foundation on which the soloist can rely, and which can so readily be adorned with passage-work to achieve the fullest effect.

WOODWIND

Not until about the beginning of the nineteenth century was the constitution of the woodwind section finally stabilized. From that time onwards, practically all scores designed for concert use included flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons in pairs – it was only in dramatic scores that rarer instruments, such as piccolo and cor anglais, were generally to be seen. Whilst Beethoven used only one flute in his C major Concerto (second actually to be written), the Third Concerto (1800) is scored for woodwind in pairs, as is Mendelssohn's G minor, of some thirty years later, roughly spanning the seven concertos of Field. It is only in Field's Third and Seventh Concertos that the standard pairing of woodwind is to be seen; the earlier works show the composer experimenting with various combinations which suggest that he had a particular timbre in mind for each concerto, selecting his woodwind complement in accordance with this, rather than conventionally using all eight players.

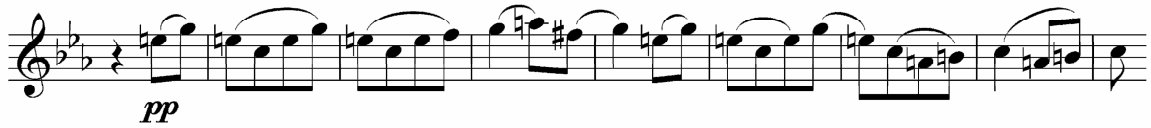
The First Concerto is scored for one flute, oboes and bassoons in pairs, thus avoiding clarinets which, whilst used with great effect, particularly by Mozart in works like the E flat Symphony, were still awaiting such developments which began with Müller's thirteen-key instrument, produced about the year 1810. Nevertheless, two clarinets appear in each concerto, from the Second (1811) onwards, although they replace the oboes in that work, as well as in the Fourth and Fifth Concertos. The woodwind requirements of the Third Concerto (which, as discussed earlier, might possibly be the

second in order of composition) are all instruments in pairs; curiously, in this work, Field makes no use of an independent wind group, such has been seen, in embryonic form in the Second Concerto, even though he has the fullest resources to date at his disposal. The composer's manner of writing for woodwind is largely concerned with their use either as solo instruments or in various pairings, to enhance the passage-work of the pianist – perhaps he felt awkwardly disposed when he had, in the Third Concerto, to accommodate all eight players. Frequently he pairs off his woodwind, and reserves the use of the whole section only for full orchestral *tuttis*, often doubling, unnecessarily, the already complete harmonic texture of the strings. As if he sensed that a full woodwind section was superfluous to his needs, the Fourth and Fifth Concertos revert to the resources of the second (one flute, and no oboes). The Sixth Concerto reinstates the oboes, and again makes more use of the woodwind as an independent body in its own right. Indeed, in the previous concerto, Field allocates the second subject to the woodwind in the orchestral exposition. It is only in the final concerto that he reconciles his use of woodwind in a solo capacity with their equal effectiveness as a massed choir, managing economically to deploy his instruments, whilst not clouding the textures as he did occasionally in his only other concerto where he had used full woodwind in pairs. In the Seventh Concerto, both first and second subjects are allotted mainly to woodwind, helped only sparingly by *pizzicato* cellos and basses.

The recent acquisition of clarinets was responsible for some of the most significant developments in the handling of the woodwind section during the first two or three decades of the nineteenth century. From its appearance in the Second Concerto onwards, Field makes extensive solo use of this instrument, whether to add greater

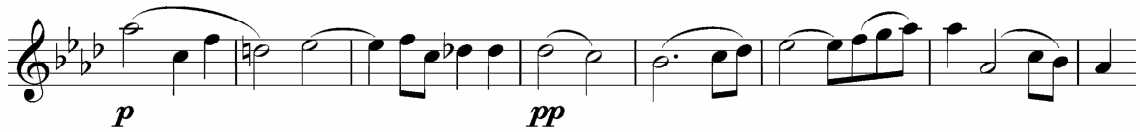
warmth and roundness of tone to the orchestral texture, or to impart a folk-like or pastoral quality, as, for example, in the six-eight *Allegretto* episode in the Fifth Concerto's rondo, or in the following passage from the rondo of the Fourth Concerto:

Ex. 198



In the Second Concerto, the first time Field includes clarinets in his scores, the instrument, in fact, makes its debut after only eight bars with an equally effective, but quite different melody, before the rest of the woodwind enter:

Ex. 199

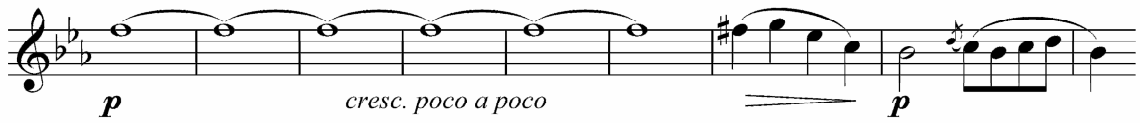


As a solo instrument, the clarinet began to assert itself only very gradually in spite of Mozart's example, and, not till nearly the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, did it generally stand on equal terms with the other woodwind instruments in this particular capacity. Field's use of the instrument throughout the last six concertos, however, would show him to have a real appreciation of the clarinet's innate qualities, and certainly his usage puts the instrument amongst the most important colours of the composer's orchestral palette. The readiness with which clarinet-tone blends with the tone of bassoons, horns, and with string-tone, had an even more far-reaching influence on orchestration as a whole, than the gain of a new solo voice. The smooth-toned combinations of clarinets and bassoons, particularly common in Field's scores, or

clarinets, bassoons and horns, began to replace the woodwind combinations in which the more incisive-toned oboe had previously always participated when, early in the nineteenth century, the newcomer had at last secured its assured place in the orchestra. A distinct preference for the warmer and round-toned blends, in which clarinet-tone largely replaced this hitherto predominant oboe-tone, is a feature of orchestration which became very marked during the maturity of Beethoven, Weber and Schubert, and signals the end of the long reign of the oboe as chief and leader of the woodwind section. Whilst Field's writing for the clarinet is always effective, he prefers to keep in the middle and upper range, making no specific use of the *chalumeau* register, for its distinctive timbre.

In the First Concerto, the oboe-tone is naturally conspicuous, but characteristic melodic-lines for this instrument are quite rare even in this work, where clarinets had not, as yet, ousted the oboe. Solos, where they occur, tend to be stereotyped and conservative:

Ex. 200

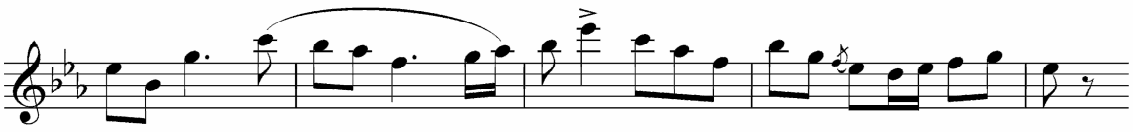


The Third and Sixth Concertos certainly confirm the rising popularity of the clarinet as against the oboe, for in these two works, the majority of solo woodwind work is entrusted mainly to bassoons and clarinets. Only in the Seventh Concerto does the oboe begin to gain ground again, and here the distinctive tone colour and true expressive capabilities of the instrument, quite different from, but not inferior to the clarinet, are used as a new orchestral timbre, replacing Field's earlier more traditional conception of the oboe's potential. Interestingly, whilst the last concerto is scored, like the third, for woodwind in

pairs, the freedom and independence for each instrument in the former work clearly shows a line of development and a reappraisal of the composer's conception of woodwind-writing.

The flute in Field's concertos again largely suffered at the hands of the clarinets. In the First Concerto, it features prominently, particularly in the slow movement, with the smaller woodwind contingent, or else when, as is often the case, it doubles a violin phrase at the octave above, to highlight a specific melodic figure. Elsewhere in the concertos, except in the Seventh, its use is fairly limited to *tuttis*, or occasional doublings, at two octaves' distance, with bassoons. Just as the oboe found a new lease of life in Field's Seventh Concerto, so, too, did the flute. The clearer texture, which this work exhibits, allowed the composer much greater freedom to indulge in frequent solo part-swapping, as in the A minor episode of the rondo, or where, in the same movement, the flute embarks on a short canonic section with the piano (discussed under Seventh Concerto). Whilst in the earlier concertos there are still many places where Field highlights a particular melodic phrase by momentarily doubling it at the high octave by the flute, pure solos of any length, like the following from the *Polacca* of the Third Concerto, are more the exception than the rule:

Ex. 201



On only two occasions does Field write for two flutes; in the Third Concerto, especially in *tuttis*, the overloading of parts and thickening of texture caused by his often treating

the flutes as two separate harmonic voices, possibly suggested to him that one flute would suffice in the Sixth Concerto, where the rest of the woodwind are paired. In this work the single flute is often merely doubling oboe or clarinet, an octave higher, in the *tuttis*, making for a far greater clarity of line – also, it is used effectively in short melodic exchanges with the rest of the woodwind. Field probably felt that two flutes would be needed in his final concerto, especially because there are far more occasions than before when the woodwind section has to stand alone, or with minimal assistance, often from lower strings.

The prominence of Field's bassoon parts is evident from the First Concerto onwards, and two players are thus required from the outset; he makes no changes in this area of woodwind throughout his concerto-output. As with the clarinets, there are numerous solos for these instruments, where they often add a new counterpoint to piano figuration. There are also, of course, frequent examples where they merely double the viola or cello part. It is noticeable that Field prefers to use them mainly as tenor instruments, especially in solo phrases, restricting the use of the lowest register usually to second bassoon, mainly in the later works, when it has to assume the bass part of the woodwind group, even when horns are included above it. Beethoven, too, indulged in this practice, but often the single bassoon is not really able to sustain the bass part successfully, with the weight of sound above it. The inclusion of a bass trombone in the last three concertos went some way towards redressing this imbalance, but there are still occasions in the Sixth Concerto where the second bassoon is doubled by the bass trombone in such a situation, but only here from bottom F upwards, leaving the lowest seven notes of the bassoon self-supporting, although low B natural and C sharp were not

available until the middle of the century. As had been said earlier, the commonest use of bassoons in Field's scores is when doubled at the octave by clarinets, or when used in four-part harmony with them. Especially successful solo uses have been cited earlier as, for example, when, in the B major development section of the Second Concerto's opening movement, bassoons add an inner harmonic-line to the piano's dreamy theme, against a background of *tremolando* strings. Equally distinctive is the phrase with which a solo bassoon leads into the *Meno Mosso* development section in the first movement of the Sixth Concerto:

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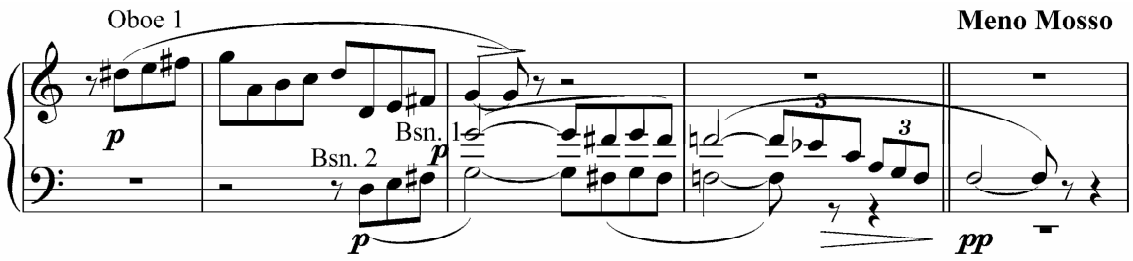
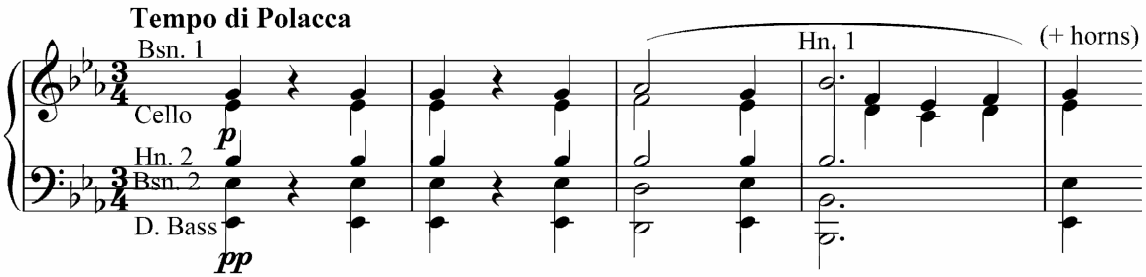


Field also experiments with bassoons in combination with instruments of other orchestral families to produce different timbres. In the Sixth Concerto, he forms a chordal group of bassoons, horns and bass trombone, just before the pianist's first entry, whilst to open the *Polacca* of the Third Concerto, he dovetails wind and strings to good effect:

Ex. 203



Generally speaking, Field tends to avoid using woodwind-only *tuttis* in the earlier concertos; in the Seventh Concerto alone does he really fully allow the woodwind to participate, unaided, in giving out important thematic material. Near the end of the Second Concerto, woodwind, assisted by horns and timpani, are permitted eight bars for the final statement of the rondo theme – there are also short, and tentative moments where woodwind alone, or, against passage-work from the soloist, have a new and important collective role. The Third Concerto, as has been mentioned earlier, is somewhat retrogressive in this respect, but in the Fourth Concerto's finale, there is an effective section where the rondo theme is played by wind, against figuration from the piano. In the Fifth Concerto, woodwind is allotted the second subject in the orchestral exposition, whilst in the Sixth there is an independent use of the wind group against string accompaniment in the opening *tutti*, as well as at the end of that movement. Field's last concerto sums up these earlier trends from this standpoint, and the more general aspects of woodwind-writing, exemplified as such by the woodwind section being more or less totally responsible for introducing both the first and second subject material in the opening *tutti*, as well as by the more enlightened use of the individual instruments, as discussed previously.

In conclusion, however, the essence of Field's effective woodwind-writing must be that the constituent members, whether alone or in combination, always stand out in strong relief against the harmonic backgrounds of his accompaniments. The clear utterance of melodic wind-parts is not blurred by sustained harmonic padding, except in the *tuttis* of the earlier concertos, and the counter-melodies introduced, neither interfere with the melodic nor accompanying parts, and neither lose their individuality as a result

of over-blending or intermixing the colours. This description of Field's use of woodwind could equally be applied to Rossini, and the possible debt which Field might owe to Italian opera has, in fact, already been witnessed, with regards to the sources of his singing *cantilena* on the keyboard. Whilst the Third Concerto has been criticized for its over-full doublings, a short excerpt from the *Polacca* of this work shows the composer writing for wind instruments in the manner he preferred – as solo instruments:

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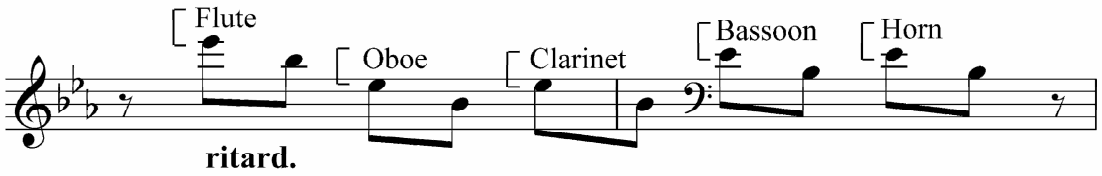


By the Seventh Concerto, Field had managed to reconcile these two aspects, the solo, and the use as a wind band, to produce a texture at last fully serviceable for the varying demands of his musical ideas.

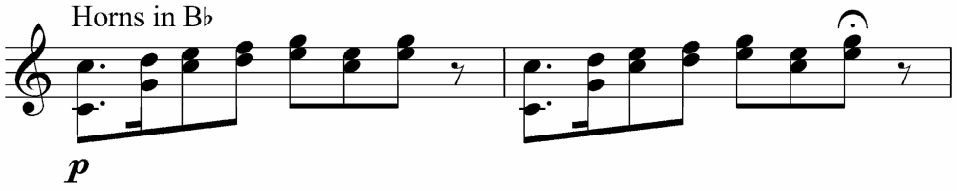
BRASS

The valve horn and valve trumpet came into general use after Field's seven concertos had been written, and consequently the composer's writing for brass instruments is certainly restricted by the limitations imposed by the currently available natural horns and trumpets; but these restrictions are not detrimental to the orchestral texture as a whole. The ingenuity and adaptability shown by Field, and his contemporaries, in their efforts to make the most of such small resources attests to the need they felt for the sound of brass in the orchestra. For the first four concertos, Field uses a well-established brass complement of two horns and two trumpets, such as

Beethoven in his C major Concerto and Mendelssohn later in the G minor employed. In the last three concertos, Field adds a bass trombone to his brass section, as well as making some modifications to the trumpet and horn parts, to be discussed later.

Field's earliest horn parts, in the First Concerto, are practically Mozartian in style and scope; they are freely allied with the woodwind group, with the strings, or with both groups together, in order to provide cohesion, body of tone, or contrast of tone-colour, whenever the key of the music is favourable. They also participate in such melodic movement as can be coaxed from their limited range of open notes, (only one stopped note appears in the First Concerto), or are used as a pair of soloists in characteristic passages, actually derived from their available notes, such as in the slow movement:

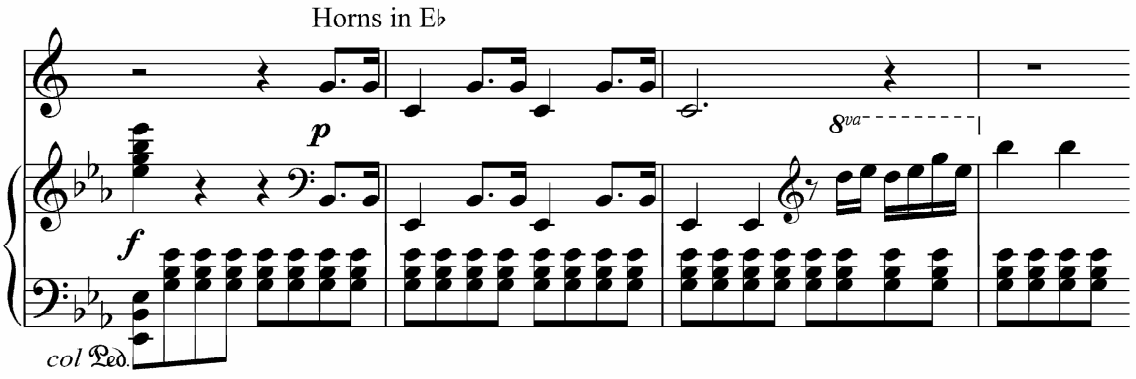
Ex. 205



Pedal-notes for horns, in octaves or in fifths, are frequently used, both in loud and soft combinations as, for example, in the opening bars of the rondo and, by means of independent rhythmical figures, they generally add interest and variety to the orchestral texture. No crook-changes, within movements, are required in the First Concerto, the only change needed for the slow movement, from E flat to B flat horns. The horn parts of the Second Concerto largely represent little advance over the previous work, though there is a nine-bar section in the opening movement where a crook-change from E flat to C is required. Here, while the part is specified 'solo', it consists merely of a series of intoned

Cs, in varying rhythmic patterns. In the Third Concerto, stopped notes are used more freely, thereby allowing the horns more fully to participate in melodic figures, and two conspicuous solo uses occur. At the recapitulation of the first subject, in the opening movement, the solo piano is joined, for three bars only, by solo horns:

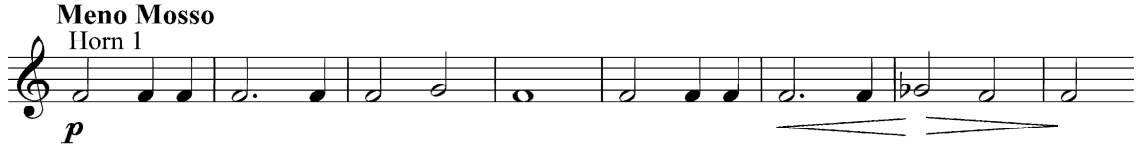
Ex. 206



In the *Più moderato* section near the end of the *Polacca*, two horns in C appear in a solo capacity, whilst the piano decorates their characteristically pastoral theme with right-hand arpeggios. The Fourth and Fifth Concertos show an increasing use of stopped notes, but basically represent only a natural development of the classical method of horn-writing in the earlier works. It has been mentioned already that the wind group, *per se*, can be seen emerging at least from the Fourth Concerto onwards, and the use of horns in this context, closely allied with the woodwind, becomes more and more evident. The Sixth Concerto represents an advance, not only in terms of the degree of participation for the horns, but also in their manner of treatment. Whilst the key of the concerto is C, the horn parts are notated in the players' parts as 'Horns in F'. Until about the end of the eighteenth century, horn players were strictly divided into two distinct categories, first horns, or 'cors-alto', and second horns, or 'cors-basse'. With, or a little before, the turn of the

century there grew up a third category known as 'cors-mixte', who specialized in a limited range of about an octave and a half, from the fourth to the twelfth harmonic. This is the range in which a reasonably homogenous tone quality could be obtained throughout, and it was the 'cor-mixte' who settled on the F crook as the best for the purpose, and used it, regardless of the key of the piece. In Spontini's *La Vestale*, of 1807, some twelve years before the first performance of Field's Sixth Concerto, there is an important horn solo *obbligato* written for the F horn, although the key is E flat and the horns in the accompanying orchestra are in E flat. Whilst in Field's Sixth Concerto there is an increased participation in melodic figures due to a far more frequent use of stopped notes, a more romantic conception of the instrument's true potential, than in the earlier concertos, is in evidence, particularly in the *Meno Mosso* section of the first movement. Here, solo first horn plays a long melody in unison with the piano's left-hand part, while the right hand embroiders this with arpeggio figures, all over a cushion of muted strings:

Ex. 207



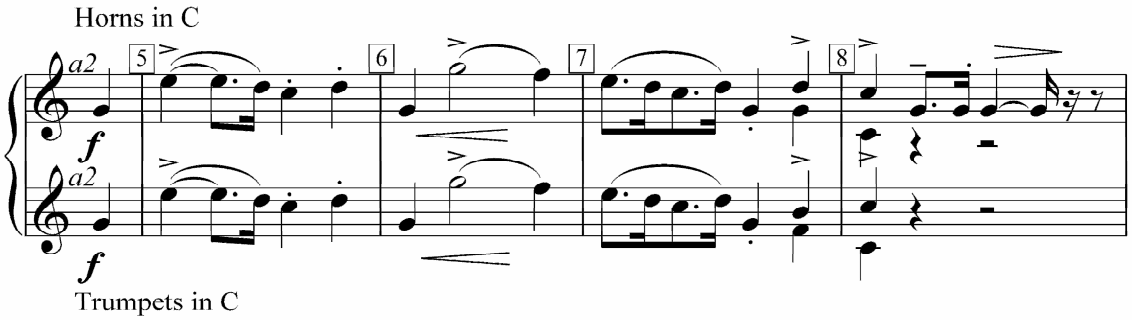
There are also some more romantically-tinged passages in the slow movement of this concerto. In the Seventh Concerto, Field writes for horns in C, but crook changes to E flat and G are more frequent within the movements and, in accordance with the general clarity of texture which is a feature of this work's orchestration, a significant amount of solo usage is evident, as well as the even more important function of helping the wind group to become more and more an independent entity.

Field's trumpet parts, in the first five concertos, bear witness to the fact that, along with his contemporaries, he was more restricted by the limitations of the natural instruments than he was in writing for horns, where stopped notes were, at least, available. Crooked only in B flat, C, D or E flat initially, the range of available notes was necessarily smaller when the music modulated to other keys. Field's usage is much in accordance with that of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven; trumpets are employed largely to add brilliance and bulk of tone to the louder *tuttis*, very occasionally participating in the quieter combinations. Usually, but not invariably, playing in partnership with drums, their contribution to the orchestration is rhythmic rather than melodic. As the music wanders away from its original key, the selection of available trumpet notes becomes smaller and smaller till, in remote keys, the instrument drops out of the orchestration altogether. Used under these conditions, the penetrating tone of the trumpets sometimes gives undue prominence to notes of the harmony which hardly bear emphasizing, but Field, along with his contemporaries, was often faced with the choice of either underlining somewhat undesirable notes (as in the Second Concerto where, having to use trumpets in E flat when the key is A flat, neither the tonic nor the mediant of the concerto's key is available), or of doing without trumpet-tone at times when the orchestration called for it. Judiciously managed, it was felt better to put up with the first evil, rather than to sacrifice the brilliance which trumpets gave to the orchestral *tutti*.

In the Sixth Concerto, whilst two trumpets in C are stipulated on the first page of the score, and the first movement's main theme can partly be accommodated by the available open-notes, the sixth and seventh bars contain notes seemingly unplayable as

harmonics. The horn part in the same bars is written in accordance with the usual limitations, but the trumpet parts freely follow the melodic-line of the violins:

Ex. 208



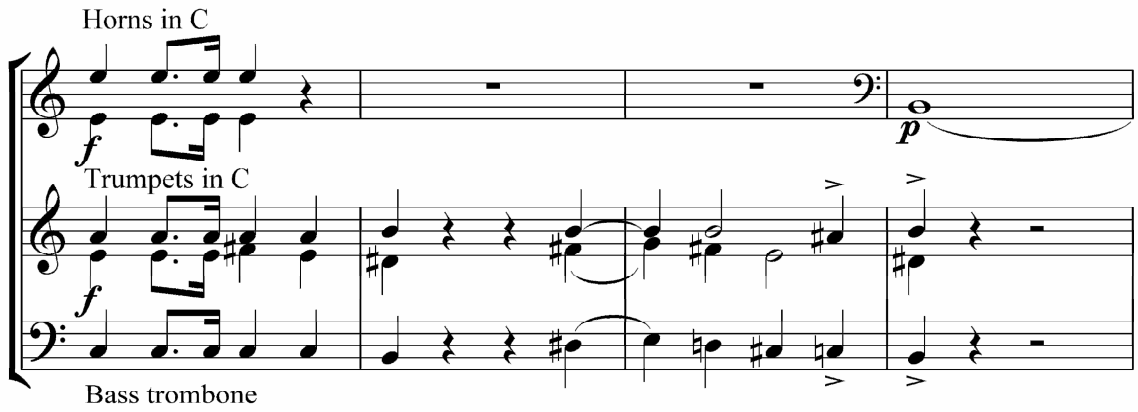
In bar six, the F was available as a stopped note on the horn and, whilst generally avoided, could, on the trumpet, be sounded by playing the eleventh harmonic (lying in pitch between F sharp and F natural) flatter than usual – by no means a satisfactory practice. The B and F on the last beat of the seventh bar in the trumpets' parts were not available. As the movement progresses, the trumpet part contains many more notes which were just not playable, as part of the harmonic series of a trumpet in C. In fact, the part can be accommodated only on an instrument possessing a chromatic compass, at least between middle C and the C above. Although Stölzel and Blühmel had invented the valve system by about 1815, it was not in general use until some years later, and would not have been available to Field, in 1819, when the Sixth Concerto received its first performance. A few isolated instances of other than open notes can be found in trumpet parts of Beethoven's period, although generally it was a rare occurrence before 1830. Mendelssohn's trumpet parts occasionally demand notes other than harmonics, but during his time, valve trumpets were available, and were specifically designated as such, in the score. There are still occasions even then when other than open notes occur in his scores,

and the valve instrument is not specified. In all these cases, including Field's Sixth Concerto, in the absence of valves there are three further possibilities.

The *demilune* trumpet was used a little in the second half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth. This instrument was designed so that the bell was turned to allow hand-stopping, as on the horn. However, the difference in tone quality between stopped notes and open notes was much more noticeable than on the horn, and the instrument never gained general acceptance in the orchestra. Another instrument that might have solved the problem was the slide trumpet. Slide trumpets continued to lead a shadowy existence in Germany up to the time of Bach (his *tromba da tirarsi*), and next appeared some time later in 1798 in the *Compleat Preceptor* by John Hyde, a leading exponent. Though melodies in many keys could be played, it never progressed far beyond being treated virtually as a natural trumpet and, like this instrument, was equipped with crooks as late as 1906, when it was fighting for its existence against the valve trumpet. Although Field may well have heard it whilst in London, the slide trumpet was hardly known anywhere but in England, when the Sixth Concerto was written. The third experiment was the *key trumpet*, with four brass keys of woodwind pattern opened to shorten the tube. Its introduction is initially credited to Kälbel of St Petersburg, about the year 1770; basing his design on the fingering system of the old cornett, he added keys to facilitate the mode of playing, and his lead was soon followed by makers in France and Germany. The *key trumpet* was introduced in Vienna in 1801 by Weidinger and Riedl and, whilst a certain amount of brilliance was lost when notes did not sound through the bell of the instrument, it was for the *key trumpet* that both Haydn and Hummel wrote their concertos. It was not generally accepted into the orchestra, but had some vogue with

the Italians at the time – two solitary D flats occur in Rossini's *Semiramide* Overture. Field's possible debt to Italian opera and its orchestration has already been noted, and he did spend a short time studying in Vienna in 1802. Although this evidence is somewhat circumstantial, it seems most likely that Field, as well as Mendelssohn, had the *key trumpet* in mind when other than stopped notes occurred in their trumpet parts, rather than the other two possibilities mentioned. Field may well have chosen it for the Sixth Concerto because, having augmented the brass section in the previous work, he might have felt that the brass group could still not function independently when their main melody instrument was so limited in its available notes. In the Sixth Concerto's first movement, whilst the brass group never exists on its own, there are a number of occasions where the harmony in this section is, for the first time, as unhampered by limitations as the woodwind or string sections. It is interesting to observe, however, that in the rondo, which is the slightest and lightest in all Field's concertos, the bass trombone is not used and, because the possibility and indeed necessity of the brass group to function on its own no longer exists, the trumpet parts revert to those requiring only a natural instrument for their performance: this is quite a contrast to the weighty scoring of the first movement:

Ex. 209



Near the beginning of the nineteenth century, the choice of pitches for the trumpet had settled on the F instrument as standard. It was equipped with a tuning slide, and crooks could be applied to put the instrument in E, E flat, D and C, with lower pitches available by combining crooks. For his last concerto, Field seemingly having dismissed the experimental trumpet-writing of his previous work, returns to the natural instrument, quite possibly the then current F trumpet, using mainly the C crook, although changing, on occasions to the E flat crook. This is the first instance of crook changes for trumpets during the seven concertos and would tend to confirm the fact that he was not satisfied with the *key trumpet* as a means of writing fuller parts for these instruments. With the concerto being in C minor, the C crook would furnish tonic and dominant notes, as well as the major third when required, but the E flat crook would be necessary when the minor third was asked for; the *key trumpet* could have accomplished this, but Field certainly seemed not to favour it in the Seventh Concerto. Also, with the greater clarity of texture and more prominent and complete woodwind parts, the need for the brass section to function on its own does not really seem to arise in this work.

Field includes the bass trombone in the brass section from the Fifth Concerto onwards. At the time of its composition, the resources stipulated in the brass section of

the orchestra were variable; from two to four horns, two trumpets and three trombones was usual practice for large operatic or choral works, but for symphony and concert-works generally, trombone parts were more the exception than the rule. Even in the field of opera, French and Italian composers sometimes wrote only one trombone part, for the tenor instrument, whilst their German counterparts kept to the original trio of alto, tenor and bass trombone (in E flat, or more usually in F). In the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, the alto and bass trombones in E flat became practically obsolete, and in England the bass instrument in F gave way to the less unwieldy bass trombone in G. The standard trio then became two tenors and one bass, and has remained so ever since. Despite a few dramatic touches in *Fidelio*, Beethoven did not advance greatly on the path of progress in handling trombones, and the blare of *fortissimo* brass harmony, such as is seen in most of Rossini's *tuttis*, would not have appealed greatly to Field's nature. In consideration of these two facts, it seems quite likely that Field's only intention, in incorporating the rather unusual choice of a bass trombone, was to provide the second bassoon part with some reinforcement, as the woodwind and horn group gained greater, though still relatively inhibited, importance. To all intents and purposes, this is the function of the bass trombone in Field's last three concertos; it doubles the bass-line in *tuttis*, assists the bassoon in the lower register, when used as the bass of the full wind section, and otherwise remains silent. The attempts at providing full brass harmony, as in the Sixth Concerto's first movement, are only experimental, and are not followed up in the Seventh Concerto. Here again, the bass trombone's main purpose is to strengthen the bass part of the wind section which, as has been mentioned earlier, is certainly more important than in any of the other six concertos.

PERCUSSION

All Field's seven concertos contain parts for two timpani, tuned to the tonic and dominant, except for the Second Concerto, where the tuning is E flat and B flat although the concerto's key is A flat. The use which Field makes of timpani is fairly conservative for the time. Whilst they join the trumpets in the loud *tutti*, they also add soft touches and more extended rolls, especially to assist a dramatic *crescendo* and *decrescendo* effect. By the Seventh Concerto, they appear in a solo capacity, introducing the first movement with two soft rolls, but Haydn had already used this effect, and Beethoven's writing for timpani certainly showed Field's to be a conventional enough usage, though nevertheless successful within the confines of his musical framework. It is only in the Second Concerto where there are some minor problems caused by the tuning. With the tonic not available, the reinforcement, especially in the low register, of the dominant, in passages where the cello and bass line is either missing or independent, can cause some slight concern with its implied tonic six-four chords: this is particularly noticeable towards the end of the rondo, where wind and timpani are playing alone – here, in performance, the bass line supplied by the second bassoon can easily be swamped by the timpani, both marked *forte* in the parts. Although a considerable amount of the concerto is in the dominant key (in which the timpani are tuned), it would seem that Field might have been better advised to tune to the home key, as this was certainly possible on the F to F octave range then available from a pair of timpani.

It has already been mentioned that the Fifth Concerto, in the 'Storm' section, contains parts for a second piano, and includes a resounding crash on the tam-tam, as well as a reiterated pedal given out by a bell tuned to the note B. The use of a second

piano is certainly unique in a piano concerto of the time, and the latter two effects, whilst probably originating in the pit of the opera house, were appearing for the first time in a concerto. As the nineteenth century progressed, of course, the list of percussion instruments, used as 'special effects', became an exhaustive one, but Field's orchestration in this respect is certainly novel and became well-developed after his death.

In summing up Field's use of the orchestra, it must be said that it is always an effective accompaniment to the solo piano. Written, as the concertos are, as a vehicle for the composer's pianistic virtuosity, it is not surprising to find that the solo instrument dominates the proceedings, only resting briefly during the short *tutti* sections within the movements. Indeed, often Field has the piano state a theme simply, and then follows this with a further embellished version, where, perhaps, the first statement would have been more effectively given over to the orchestra, to heighten the contrast: such a case in point, for example, and mentioned earlier, would be the piano's statement of the second subject of the A flat Concerto, firstly chordal and then immediately followed by an embellished working out. Nevertheless, by comparison with Chopin's works with orchestra, there is still considerably more to be done, not only in the *tutti* sections, but also in accompanying the soloist. It is worth observing that Field kept the conventional opening *tutti* throughout the seven concertos, thereby allowing the orchestra to have at least the first say.

Although in the Sixth Concerto the soloist is introduced into what was usually the orchestra's domain, Field does not continue the experiments of Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth Concertos where, with vastly different effects, the piano appears before the opening orchestral *tutti*. As an effective orchestrator, Field possibly felt that it was better to leave things as he found them, with regards to the opening of each concerto (except for the

isolated instance of the sixth), relying on the fact that the first *tutti* would be efficiently and successfully scored, creating a greater feeling of anticipation for the solo piano's first entry. The fact that five out of the seven concertos have opening *tuttis* where the first and second subjects are given out in accordance with the key-scheme of symphonic first-movement form, might suggest that Field considered this part of the movement equally as important from the orchestra's standpoint, as the rest of the work would be from the soloist's. His opening *tuttis* are always well scored, and never abruptly curtailed, as they well might have been, had Field merely seen them as part of the ritual before the concerto proper commenced, when the soloist entered.

In the central section of the slow movement from Beethoven's Third Concerto, the composer broke new ground by making the piano accompany a duet for bassoon and flute, with quiet, rippling arpeggios. It became commonplace in romantic concertos (for example, in the slow movement of Mendelssohn's G minor Concerto) for the piano to be given a subsidiary role here and there, but it was very unusual in 1800. Field, in accordance with his conception of the soloist's position of prime importance, makes very little use of this practice until the Seventh Concerto where, in the A minor episode of the rondo, the piano accompanies various solo woodwind instruments. Especially in this rondo, there is more give and take between piano and orchestra than in previous finales, but, as far as the overall relationship throughout the seven concertos is concerned, the piano receives *prima donna* treatment, even though the 'chorus', too, has an important part to play.

FIELD AND CONCERTO FORM

Field's formal plans, in the seven concertos, have received a great deal of criticism for their apparent lack of direction and sectional imbalance, for their often rambling and shapeless design which, it is suggested, often shows the composer as if lost in a maze from which he had no idea how to extricate himself. The purpose of this final chapter is to take the concertos as a whole and to investigate their overall design in the context of the developing concerto-form of the time, rather than to scrutinize too closely the internal links between sections which, as has been commented upon earlier, are, admittedly on occasions, somewhat suspect.

The classical concerto, in the form definitively established by Mozart, in the 1780s, resembles the concerto of Vivaldi in its general scheme of three movements, and in the relatively greater length and weight of the first movement as compared with the other two. So far as the thematic aspect of the concerto's first movement is concerned, the last half of the eighteenth century saw the gradual merging of the old *ritornello* form with sonata form. Gradually the reappearances of the *ritornello* became reduced by two (dispensing with the relative, and subdominant *tuttis*) when the form of the classical concerto, with one *tutti* in the dominant half-way through the movement and the other at the end in the tonic, emerged from its predecessor, the baroque concerto. The similarities between this adapted type of *ritornello* form and early sonata form are clear: the dominant *ritornello* leading straightway into a fairly wide circle of modulations, which arrive back at a final *ritornello* in the tonic, is a parallel with the development and recapitulation of sonata form. Similarly, the first solo, which begins in the tonic and modulates to the dominant, is analogous to the exposition of sonata form. Only the

opening *ritornello*, beginning and ending in the tonic as it does, is foreign to sonata form, and as the sonata principle infiltrated into the concerto, composers came to regard the opening *ritornello* as a self-contained orchestral introduction.

The first *tutti* is not regarded as a sonata exposition, as this really begins with the first solo. Mozart and Beethoven, as was mentioned earlier in the discussion on Field's First Concerto, do write 'double expositions', but these rare instances are exceptions, and do not alter the fact that the first *tutti* is a survival from the baroque concerto. It is only in the first solo that the key contrast generally occurs, indeed true second subjects, whereas frequently the *ritornello* merely presents a string of secondary material (in the tonic) following the main theme. Mozart treats the beginning of the first solo in a variety of ways, sometimes introducing a brief thematic diversion for the soloist before the main theme. Beethoven, following Mozart, sometimes introduced an important new theme in the soloist's exposition. More rarely, he let the orchestra have a contrasting theme that did not come until the recapitulation. Generally, the concluding *tutti* is interrupted on a cadential six-four chord, a *cadenza* intervening between it and the final dominant seventh-to-tonic resolution. Subsequently, a final extended trill on the dominant-seventh chord gave the orchestra its cue to resume the *tutti* and bring the movement swiftly to an end.

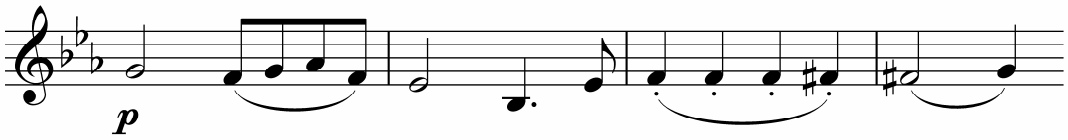
Although Mozart (in his E flat Concerto, K. 271) had previously allowed the piano to join in the opening bars, the effect is far less striking than that achieved by Beethoven with the quiet opening of the Fourth Concerto, or with the equally original, but quite different start of the 'Emperor' – a grand *cadenza* for the soloist, punctuated by three massive chords from the orchestra. Indeed, the problem of the opening was an

important consideration in the subsequent development of the romantic concerto and, until a suitable compromise could be found, many concertos of the early nineteenth century, for instance by Moscheles and Cramer, have no place in the current repertoire; in most of these examples, the first *tutti* sounds as though it was conceived after the soloist-orchestra exposition, and tacked on as a matter of tradition. Mendelssohn, taking his cue from Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth Concertos, scrapped the orchestral preamble altogether, and his three best-known concertos are all 'single-exposition' works. The G minor Concerto, performed a year earlier than Field's Seventh Concerto, has no great classical *tutti* to herald the development section, and the recapitulation is one of the shortest known. These formal experiments are the more successful by the use of certain unifying devices, which might have given Field's equally experimental canvasses far greater cohesion – in Mendelssohn's case, near the end of the last movement, quotations from the first movement are heard and this, together with the tucket of horns, used to unite the three movements, helps to create a more unified whole. The logical continuation of the experimental ideas first broached by Field, Spohr and Weber, and amplified by Mendelssohn led ultimately to the Second Concerto of Liszt, a real one-movement work, in fact a non-programmatic symphonic poem for piano and orchestra, not based on the sonata-form alternation of orchestral *ritornelli* and solo episodes, but at last reverting again to the 'concerto' in one of its earlier connotations – the opposition of two distinct tone masses.

Whilst the time-span of Field's concertos, 1799 – 1832, is roughly parallelled by Beethoven's First Concerto and Mendelssohn's G minor, in terms of chronological perspective, the genealogy of Liszt's subsequent thinking is clearly shown by the fact that

he makes specific mention of his acquaintance with the devices of formal unity in the earlier-written concertos of Herz, Moscheles and Field. In the first four concertos, as well as in the seventh, Field writes a true double exposition with the second subject placed in the symphonically-conventional dominant, or relative major, in the case of the last concerto. When Beethoven did the same in his C minor Concerto, it was partly because the second subject could only be used in a major-key version, unless the end of it was changed, to negotiate the final appoggiatura:

Ex. 210



No such similar problem occurred in Field's themes, and thus it must be for some other reason that he largely chose to write symphonic opening *tuttis*. In the case of the First Concerto, the first subject is not recapitulated, and Field might well have considered that it needed greater prominence in the opening *tutti*, which he thus obtained by true contrast of key with the second subject. He possibly also felt that sufficient contrast between orchestral and solo exposition would be achieved simply by the extra embellishments which the piano could clearly add and, as had been said already, he was not, even at seventeen, afraid of writing a quite lengthy orchestral opening, confident, as he would have been in his obvious ability as an orchestrator. The Second Concerto, from this formal standpoint, is modelled on the first (except that the recapitulation is complete), and Field most likely considered that the far more romantic writing for the solo instrument was ample compensation for again writing a double exposition. In the

second subject of this concerto, another reason why the composer showed a preference for this type of exposition comes to light; it has been noted that Field often allows the soloist two statements of a theme, the one usually more chordally conceived, the other exploiting the piano's expressive qualities. As this first statement could easily be played by the orchestra, Field may have thought that, by giving this to the soloist, in the second-subject key, he was obliged to do likewise for the orchestra – the only place where this could be achieved, without too much trouble, was in the opening *tutti*. By the time of the Third Concerto, whilst continuing to adopt this plan, Field seemed to sense that something else needed to be done, to heighten the contrast between orchestral and solo expositions. To this end, as Beethoven had done before, he interpolates a new theme in the first solo, between the first and second subjects, but which does not reappear. This pattern is used again in the next concerto, although the 'new theme' serves partly as an anticipatory glance at the subsequent manner of treatment which the second subject will receive. In the next two concertos, Field writes orthodox first *tuttis*, with both subjects in the tonic key. Because, as far as the exposition of the Fifth Concerto is concerned, he has followed Mozart's example for the first time in his concerto-output, he avoids introducing a new theme in the solo exposition, relying, hopefully, on the contrast of the first modulation away from the tonic, now being somewhat later than usual and, of course, on the dramatic and novel effects of the later development, the 'Storm' section. Effective as this is, Field was no doubt aware that one of the main defects of the Fifth Concerto as a whole, and the remainder of the first movement in particular, was that it was almost totally in C major throughout. This may well have prompted him to think more closely about the exposition of the Sixth Concerto, again without an orthodox

concerto key-scheme. For, not only does he introduce the soloist for eight bars in the opening *tutti*, a very rare, if not unique occurrence so close to the real first entry, he further introduces a somewhat lengthy new theme, still in the tonic key, before the piano makes the first modulation to the dominant for the second subject. Reverting to a practice noted initially in the First Concerto, Field does not recapitulate both subjects; in this case he omits the second subject.

The still somewhat experimental nature of this movement, as witnessed by the incomplete recapitulation and, of course, by the *Meno Mosso* section which stands in lieu of a development, may well have caused the composer to return to the double-exposition construction, numerically more familiar to him, from the earlier concertos, when he planned his Seventh Concerto. The incorporation of two distinct episodes (one functioning as a slow movement) instead of a true development section, no doubt suggested to Field that the simpler plan of the first two concertos, with regards to their expositions, would now be sufficient in as much as the development of the Seventh Concerto would appear extremely original, and thereby contrasting; he therefore writes a double exposition and conventional recapitulation, introducing no new theme in the solo half.

The Third and Fourth Concertos both introduce the soloist in similar vein; the piano's opening statements are initially devoid either of decoration, or of direct reference to the orchestral first subject. For the Fifth Concerto, Field combines the declamatory elements in the previous two works with a more virtuosic piano style – a terse statement, again only indirectly related to the actual first subject. The opening of the Sixth Concerto has already received some comment: Field, for the first and only time, decides to

introduce the soloist, not with virtuoso panache, but quietly and simply with an inversion of the first subject's melodic-line, played by the left and right hands an octave apart. This mode of treatment has been discussed earlier and, had Field written this opening some years later when the device was familiar in romantic piano-concerto writing, he might not have decided on needing the eight-bar intrusion which precedes the soloist's real first entry. It seems as if he were uncertain of the effect which his soft, octave opening would have on his listeners, who were naturally unfamiliar in Field's concertos with this 'orchestral' treatment of the solo piano, and added those eight bars which, whilst inconsequential and exhibiting a rather bad case of 'note-spinning', nevertheless would be more 'impressive' to certain of his public. He really need only have taken courage from Beethoven's Fourth Concerto in this matter! The soloist's entry in the Seventh Concerto looks back, in some degree, to Field's First Concerto: a series of *bravura* flourishes, based on arpeggios, soon leads to a rhapsodic sentence, a very free statement of the first subject. By continuing the initial drum pattern of the concerto's opening bars when the soloist enters, a far more effective link is formed between the orchestral opening and the soloist's introductory flourishes and subsequent free statement of the first subject.

As regards the remainder of the first movement, each concerto is fairly straightforward. In the first two works, the development begins quite conventionally in the dominant minor, whereas in the Third Concerto it opens in F sharp major, approached enharmonically from the previous *tutti* in the dominant key of B flat. The greater preponderance of modulations in this concerto's development section, and in that of the next work, often, as has previously been noted, puts the harmonic ingenuity of the

composer severely on test. This, on occasions, results in unhappy juxtapositions of key, and in an overall fragmented construction where one short motif, often of no particular developmental promise, is subjected to a number of repetitions of modulatory nature, as the composer edges his way out of the remoter keys, ultimately towards the tonic and the 'safety' of the recapitulation. In the Fifth Concerto, a conventional thematic development is begun, but this is soon turned into the 'Storm' section which, whilst essentially programmatic, can still be seen as working-out previous material and figuration, though here with far greater unity of purpose. The last two concertos represent both a logical culmination of the composer's thoughts on development sections, as well as an attempt to unify the concerto as a whole. The Sixth Concerto's development begins in the dominant, but very soon becomes the *Meno Mosso* section, where a distinctly new theme and manner of treatment appears. Field carries this one step further in the final concerto, where the first of the new themes acts also as a slow movement, interspersed with references to the main thematic material of the movement.

The 'development' sections of these last three concertos are interesting and increasingly novel, but nevertheless are no real substitute for that portion of a work where thematic investigation and metamorphosis should be the order of the day. Field, in searching for something suitable to interpose between exposition and recapitulation, may have been looking to the future; equally, the insertion of a complete entity, like the Twelfth *Nocturne* which the G major section was subsequently to become, maintained an effective movement, without necessitating the organic development of thematic material , which was not the composer's strongest point. The recapitulations in the concertos are, except for the first and sixth examples, fairly regular. In his avoidance here of a

conventional *cadenza*, Field was looking forward, rather than back, and this is witnessed by the fact that on the only occasion where a *cadenza* occurs (in the Fifth Concerto), it is an accompanied one, still a great innovation in his day, despite Beethoven's example in the 'Emperor' Concerto.

Slow movements were much simpler, of course, in design than first movements, and often suggested an operatic aria with the soloist taking the place of the singer. Either the orchestra alone, or the soloist alone, could start the movement, or both parties simultaneously, as in the Second and Sixth Concertos of Field; he does not favour the soloist embarking on his own in the remaining slow movements. Whether the form of the movement be ternary, or double-ternary (that is, with two episodes), there is often an element of variation present, particularly in these concertos where the return of each main theme receives different embellishment on each appearance. In general, if an opportunity for a *cadenza* was allowed, it was understood that such a *cadenza* should be short and expressive, like those in the First Concerto, rather than long and flamboyant as in first movements. The slow movements of the Second, Fourth and Sixth Concertos are basically ternary, or double-ternary in design, whilst that of the First Concerto is cast as a theme with two variations. The only remaining example, from the Fifth Concerto, is purely orchestral, and exists as an introduction to the final rondo. Although the soloist makes a short intrusion when he refers to the ensuing rondo theme, it would appear, in consideration of Field's other works, to be little more than a subconscious process on the composer's part, rather than a conscious effort to achieve cohesion by using thematic relationships between movements. The unifying devices of Mendelssohn's G minor Concerto, or the Schumann Concerto, were not part of Field's musical equipment. For the

first two concertos, Field favoured the dominant as the key of their slow movements: in the Fourth and Sixth, he chooses a mediant relationship, whilst the short *Adagio* of the Fifth Concerto is written still in the tonic key.

Field's rondos vary from being overlong, to being more economic in length, but then suffering from the lack of contrasting episodes. Basically, each one exhibits the structural plan of simple rondo form, and there is a certain similarity of construction between them within these formal confines. In the First, Third and Seventh Concertos, the rondo is begun by the orchestra; only in the second does the piano begin solo, whilst the rondos of the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Concertos are begun by both parties together. Three appearances of the rondo main theme occur in each example and, in the first six concertos, they are separated by episodes. These, too, follow a pattern in as much as the first episode is much simpler in design from the second, and is usually far less adventurous, in terms of key contrast. Except for the First Concerto, where the first episode is in the subdominant, the dominant is the favoured key in the Second to Sixth Concertos. The second episode contains the greatest variety of modulations, ideas and orchestral and solo writing and, whilst no true development of material really occurs, the resultant concoction usually produces the most successful part of the rondo, if the internal points of construction are not examined too minutely.

In the First Concerto's rondo, whilst the second episode in the tonic minor is of greater proportions than the first, it is only from the Second Concerto onwards that this characteristic of design can be seen emerging. The second episode of the rondo in the Second Concerto is far more substantial, with its long section in the tonic minor, which leads enharmonically to further distinct passages in remote keys, culminating in a lengthy

fugato, Field's most extended essay in contrapuntal technique in his whole concerto output. From the Third Concerto, a new element occurs – the addition of a sub-section, quite different in character from the rest of the rondo, and usually exhibiting a change of tempo, or time signature. This is exemplified by the *Più Moderato* section in the Third Concerto, the short, rustic section in the Fourth, and the six-eight pastoral episode in the Fifth. The rondo of the Sixth Concerto is of very small proportions, with little in the way of contrasting episodes; however, in the second episode, a short passage in the tonic minor, with definite Russian associations, occurs (Ex. 142). In the Fifth Concerto's rondo, after the six-eight pastoral episode, a short reference to the first episode, then in the dominant, but now in the tonic, is the closest which Field comes to writing a sonata-rondo. The rondo of the Seventh Concerto is somewhat diffuse, but nevertheless can be seen as the final result of the design processes formulated in the earlier works. The first episode is now extended into two separate sub-sections, in the relative minor, and in the dominant. Field avoids the rather less-common plan of having four appearances of the rondo theme, in what is still basically a simple-rondo format, by moving straight from these two sub-sections without interposing a return of the rondo theme – in any case, he had already stated the main theme four times, at the beginning of the movement. This rondo's second episode combines facets from all the previous rondos – beginning in the subdominant, (all earlier examples had begun either in the tonic, or tonic minor) it contains extended passages in remoter keys, references to the first episode's material, and incorporates a rather disconnected and enigmatic *Adagio*.

It would seem that Field's preference for the introduction of new and mainly contrasting material, at the expense of thematic development, might have persuaded him

to create a more satisfactory vehicle as a finale, had he written an eighth concerto. Having firstly turned his hand to evolving a more congenial first-movement design, he might subsequently have investigated the similar possibility of such a plan for the finale. For the same reasons as in his formulating a first-movement plan, Field was no doubt aware that, for him, the future would not be found in the simple-rondo plan, even less in the sonata-rondo design. Whilst acknowledging the fact that, from his listeners' point of view, the brilliant concluding rondo was almost obligatory, he had, by the Seventh Concerto, evolved a form, a one-movement concerto form, which really could, and indeed should have stood on its own. If Field had had the confidence in his design which Liszt had, this disjointed and redundant rondo need not have been written, and the one-movement form could have been attributed to the former, rather than to the latter composer, and quite some years earlier, too.

This final discussion on form has only pointed out the main trends and developments throughout the seven piano concertos. More detailed analysis, comment, and indeed criticism have all been given earlier. At the start of this study, it was suggested that to describe John Field as the 'inventor of the *Nocturne*' might be to underestimate his real achievements. For this is to base an appraisal of this composer's works on a mere handful of miniatures, when compared with the bulk of his output, the piano concertos. The importance of his pianistic innovations justifies Field holding a position at the source of the Romantic Movement in musical composition. His contributions to the developing form of the romantic piano concerto, still one of the most popular and entertaining musical genres, were vital, and provided the necessary fuel to fire the creative power of later composers.

Many reasons have been put forward to account for the relative neglect which the concertos of John Field suffer, and for the consequently skewed estimation of the composer's true contribution to musical history. It is this present writer's contention that much of Field's work was in advance of its time. Whilst he achieved great fame during his lifetime, this was only on account of his great executant ability; largely, the musical content was not understood at the time, resulting in the almost total neglect, not too long after his death, of all but his *Nocturnes*. Had he lived some twenty years later, the developments in the field of romantic music, and for the piano in particular, might be more accurately attributed to their true originator, rather than to other composers, so often to be seen in the textbooks.

John Field not only invented the *Nocturne*, but also brought into being a whole new range of pianistic expressiveness and feeling, from the *cantilena* melodies, with their opera-like embellishments in the *Nocturnes* and the Concertos, to the *bravura* technical passages and devices in the latter, and in other works. The romantic flavour in music came into being with Field, but unless the larger canvasses of the Concertos are examined in conjunction with the *Nocturnes*, it is not possible accurately to assess the full extent of his influence.

Certainly the Concertos have shortcomings which, to audiences accustomed to expect continuity of thought and shapeliness of form, rob them of some of their impact. Nevertheless, there clearly remains enough despite any blemishes, in the seven piano concertos, to confirm that John Field was still one of the few truly original minds. During his lifetime, he was hailed by the French as 'The Racine of the Piano'. To make this comparison now, some three hundred or so years later, would necessitate excluding such

great dramas as *Phèdre*, or *Iphigénie*, when appraising the work of that eminent seventeenth-century French tragic poet. For this, unfortunately, would be the only easy means with which to compensate for the relative inaccessibility to all but a small part of John Field's total musical output. Equally, a revival of interest in this composer could, at any time, occasion the appearance of hitherto unpublished scores, and so redress any imbalance. Then again, perhaps the French might have been considered as unknowingly prophetic, had they referred to John Field not as 'Le Racine du Piano', but as 'la *racine* du piano' – the root of piano-playing. A fuller knowledge of his seven piano concertos definitely adds considerable weight to the latter reference, when viewed together with his already acknowledged achievements in the form of the *Nocturne*.

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