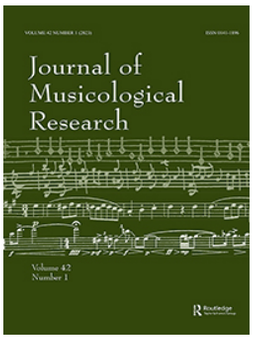

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Auenbruggers, Sensibility, and the Instrumental Bodies

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ABSTRACT

In conceiving the ideal of the man or woman of sensibility, many eighteenth-century philosophers and writers described the human body as a living instrument. The Austrian physician Josef Leopold Auenbrugger, who wrote the libretto for Salieri's *Der Rauchfangkehrer* (1781), held just such a view. Auenbrugger's musical sensibility led to his invention of the percussive technique as a diagnostic method for cardiac and respiratory diseases, a method that has received little attention by music historians despite widespread recognition in medical studies. This article reassesses the significance of Auenbrugger's work, arguing that his musical-medical understanding of sensibility, as demonstrated in his treatise *Inventum Novum* (1761), effectively reinforces the eighteenth-century idea that the responsive body functions like a sensitive string and percussive instrument. Not only so, but Auenbrugger's theory also offers applications to Haydn's "Auenbrugger" sonatas, dedicated to Leopold Auenbrugger's daughters, Caterina Franziska and Marianna.

The eighteenth century should not be framed solely as the Age of Reason. As historians are increasingly realizing, this time period can also be interpreted as the Age of Sensibility, for sensibility served as the Enlightenment's guiding force.[1] To explain sensibility, philosophers depicted the sensible man or woman as an instrument. Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, for example, described the body as a stringed instrument. In *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), he compared affections and passions to the strings, stressing the importance of careful tuning to ensure that they are neither too tight nor loose. He also observed that even within the same species of creatures, no one is fully identical to each other because, just as is the

[1]See, for example, Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Henry Martyn Lloyd, *The Discourse of Sensibility: The Knowing Body in the Enlightenment* (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2013); and Stephen Gaukroger, *The Collapse of Mechanism and the Rise of Sensibility: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1680–1760* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010).

case of instruments of the same type, each requires strings of different lengths.[2]

Related to this idea is the doctrine of vibrations. In his *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), for example, Johann Mattheson, spoke of the process of "sympathetic vibration"—a "natural concurrence by means of which one body is moved to confluence with another." This vibration works through free-sounding strings: a string, despite remaining distant and untouched, is invisibly set to vibrate by the sound of another string of the same ratio.[3] This concept of vibrations was later discussed extensively in David Hartley's *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (1749). In this treatise, published initially by the sentimental novelist Samuel Richardson, Hartley compared vibrations in the optic nerve excited by color to the vibrations of a string that sounds musical notes:

> The limits of the seven primary colours, viz. the extreme red, the limit of the red and orange, of the orange and yellow, yellow and green, green and blue, blue and indigo, indigo and violet, and the extreme violet, excite vibrations in the optic nerve, whose times are proportional to the times of vibration of a string which sounds the notes in order, according to the key mentioned by *Sir Isaac Newton* in his *Optics*, i.e. the notes D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D.[4]

Hartley demonstrated a familiarity with the relationship between tone level and string tension: "the tone of a musical string either rises or falls upon altering its tension, according as the preceding tension was greater or less than its present tension."[5] Vibrations account for the activity of the brain in a way similar to the vibration of air particles caused by sound: "A very complex set of vibrations … exists always in the medullary substance … almost in the same manner as in a concert of music the air is agitated by vibrations of a very complex kind."[6]

Philosophers preferred comparing the body to a string instrument rather than a wind instrument precisely because of the ability of instrumental strings

[2]According to Ashley-Cooper, "Upon the whole: it may be said properly to be the same with the Affections or Passions in an Animal-Constitution, as with the Cords or Strings of a Musical Instrument. If these, tho in ever so just proportion one to another, are strain'd beyond a certain degree, 'tis more than the Instrument will bear: The Lute or Lyre is abus'd, and its Effect lost. On the other hand, if while some of the Strings are duly strain'd, others are not wound up to their due proportion; then is the Instrument still in disorder, and its Part ill perform'd. The several Species of Creatures are like different sorts of Instruments: And even in the same Species of Creatures (as in the same sort of Instrument) one is not entirely like the other, nor will the same Strings fit each. The same degree of Strength which winds up one, and fits the several Strings to a just Harmony and Concert, may in another burst both the Strings and Instrument itself. Thus Men who have the liveliest Sense, and are the easiest affected with Pain or Pleasure, have need of the strongest Influence or Force of other Affections, such as Tenderness, Love, Sociableness, Compassion, in order to preserve a right Balance within, and to maintain them in their Duty, and in the just performance of their Part: whilst others, who are of a cooler Blood, or lower Key, need not the same Allay or Counterpart; nor are made by Nature to feel those tender and endearing Affections in so exquisite a degree." See Earl of Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley-Cooper, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* [1711], ed. Douglas den Uyl, vol. 3 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001), 94–95.

[3]Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* [1739], trans. Ernest Charles Harris (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), 100.

[4]David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* [1749], vol. 1 (London: J. Johnson, 1801), 41.

[5]Ibid., 62.

[6]Ibid., 63–64.

to vibrate. David Hume declared in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–1740) that passion has not "the nature of a wind-instrument of music, which in running over all the notes immediately loses the sound after the breath ceases" but "resembles a string-instrument, where after each stroke the vibrations still retain some sound, which gradually and insensibly decays."[7] Hume's thoughts might have been shaped by the doctor George Cheyne's findings, especially since Cheyne was likely the intended recipient of Hume's "Letter to a Physician."[8] In *The English Malady* (1733), Cheyne likened human nerves to keys while comparing the "Intelligent Principle" or "Soul" to a musician:

> That the Intelligent Principle, or Soul, resides somewhere in the Brain, where all the Nerves, or Instruments of Sensation terminate, like a Musician in a finely fram'd and well-tun'd Organ-Case; that these nerves are like Keys, which, being struck on or touch'd, convey the Sound and Harmony to this sentient Principle, or Musician.[9]

Just as the eighteenth-century idea of human nerves resembling musical strings was strongly rooted in contemporary philosophy, so too did it resonate within contemporary studies of human physiology. To explain the body's susceptibilities to stimuli, the German physician and professor of medicine, Ernst Anton Nicolai, compared the tone of the body's muscles, arteries, and nerves to "a tightened string of a musical instrument."[10]

Sensibility was also considered a quality fundamental to musicians, contributing to one's aesthetic judgment and musical perceptivity. Jean-Jacque Rousseau treated sensibility as a quality of the composer, the performer, and the listener that could be defined as:

> A disposition of the soul which inspires the composer with the lively ideas which he wants; the executant, with the lively idea of these same expressions; and the auditor, with the lively impression of the beauties and errors of music which he is made to hear.[11]

Although music and physiological or medical studies did not always overlap, there was a physician in Austria whose medical contributions displayed important connections to music, Joseph Leopold Auenbrugger. Auenbrugger was known for developing the percussive technique to diagnose cardiac and respiratory diseases. He was also the father of two daughters Caterina Franziska and Marianna Auenbrugger, both celebrated musicians who studied with Haydn and Salieri. This essay will examine Auenbrugger's knowledge of sensibility in

[7]David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* [1739], ed. Thomas Hill Green and Thomas Hodge Grose, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1874), 560.

[8]See John P. Wright, "Dr. George Cheyne, Chevalier Ramsay, and Hume's Letter to a Physician," *Hume Studies* 29, no. 1 (2003): 125–41.

[9]George Cheyne, *The English Malady* (London: G. Strahan, 1733), 3–4.

[10]Quoted in James Kennaway, "From Sensibility to Pathology: The Origins of the Idea of Nervous Music around 1800," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 65, no. 3 (2010): 396–426, at 408. Originally from Ernst Anton Nicolai, *Die Verbindung der Musik mit der Artzneygelahrheit* (Halle: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1745), viii–x.

[11]Jean-Jacque Rousseau, *A Dictionary of Music*, trans. William Waring (London: J. French, 1779), 359.

his treatise *Inventum Novum* (1761) and its relevance to the "Auenbrugger" sonatas, which Haydn dedicated to Caterina Franziska and Marianna. It will also reevaluate the significance of the conceptualization of human bodies as sympathetic instruments in eighteenth-century thoughts, drawing attention to possible implications of this idea in various musical contexts.

Leopold Auenbrugger and *Inventum Novum*

Born on November 19, 1722, the son of an innkeeper in Graz, Austria, Leopold Auenbrugger graduated from the University of Vienna in 1752. He worked at the Spanish Military Hospital of Vienna as a physician until 1762, when he decided to commit himself to general practice in Vienna. In addition to his work as a physician, Auenbrugger was a devotee of music. He wrote the libretto for Salieri's opera *Der Rauchfangkehrer* commissioned by Joseph II, who later elevated Auenbrugger to nobility in 1784.[12] *Der Rauchfangkehrer* premiered in the Burgtheater on April 30, 1781, shortly after Mozart's arrival in Vienna, and it was performed thirteen times before being replaced by Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in July 1782.[13] Mozart spoke rather poorly of the libretto to *Der Rauchfangkehrer*, complaining about it in a letter to his father dated December 10, 1783:

> I am writing in the greatest haste to tell you that I have already bought the opera "Der Rauchfangkehrer" for six ducats and have it at home … you seem to think that "Der Rauchfangkehrer" is an Italian opera! Not at all. It is a German and, what is more, a wretched work, the author of which is Doctor Auernszucker [sic] in Vienna. You will remember that I told you about it and of how Herr Fischer publicly damned it in the theatre.[14]

Medical scholars have taken an interest in Leopold Auenbrugger, but while many concur that his musical training and expertise informed some of his medical insights,[15] his work has had little impact on music

[12]For more about *Der Rauchfangkehrer*, see John A. Rice, "Joseph's Singspiel Troupe and *Der Rauchfangkehrer*," in *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 281–306.

[13]Daniel Heartz, ed., *Mozart's Operas*, with contributing essays by Thomas Bauman (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 67.

[14]Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, ed. Stanley Sadie and Fiona Smart (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), 863.

[15]See, for example, Luca Borghi, "Tapping on the Chest of History: Lost and Found Memories of Leopold Auenbrugger, Inventor of Percussion, in Austria and Beyond," *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* 16, no. 1 (2018): 127–44; Saul Jarcho, "Auenbrugger, Laennec, and John Keats: Some Notes on the Early History of Percussion and Auscultation," *Medical History* 5, no. 2 (1961): 167–72; Vittorio Putti, "The Portrait of Leopold Auenbrugger," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 8, no. 3 (1940): 417–18; George Rosen, "Percussion and Nostalgia," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 27, no. 4 (1972): 448–50; Alex Sakula, "Auenbrugger: Opus and Opera," *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of London* 12, no. 2 (1978): 180–88; Henry E. Sigerist, "On Percussion of the Chest: A Translation of Auenbrugger's Original Treatise by John Forbes [1761/1824]," *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine* 4 (1936): 373–403; and Pascal R. Vouhé, "The Surgeon and the Musician," *European Journal of Cardio-thoracic Surgery* 39, no. 1 (2011): 1–5.

scholarship.[16] In comparison, Franz Anton Mesmer's Mesmerism, known also as "animal magnetism," has received a great deal of attention from musicologists.[17] Mesmer graduated with a medical doctorate with his dissertation *Dissertatio physico-medica de planetarum influx* (1766), a work foundational to *Mémoire sur la découverte du magnétisme animal* (1779) in which he formulated the theory of animal magnetism. Animal magnetism posits a universal magnetic force that, when properly manipulated, may heal diseases by restoring the fluid flow of the body. Mesmer's ideas have attracted substantial interest in a variety of musicological studies.[18] His relationship with the blind pianist Maria Theresia von Paradis who lost her eyesight between the ages of two and five has also been a source of fascination for scholars and artists alike. The Austrian director Barbara Albert produced the acclaimed film *Mademoiselle Paradis* (2017) to tell the story of how Mesmer attempted to heal Paradis. A student of Antoni Salieri, she was eighteen when Mesmer attempted to cure her, although, perhaps unsurprisingly, her blindness was never reversed.[19]

Mesmer's failure to heal Paradis resulted in him having to move from Vienna in 1777, as his practice became increasingly controversial. He moved to Paris in 1778 and in 1784, Louis XVI appointed two commissions to interrogate the validity of Mesmerism. The first commission compiled an official report that presented Mesmerism in an unfavorable light.[20] A secret report, conceived from the belief that "it was prudent to suppress an observation that should not be divulged," was also sent to the king to explain the potential moral dangers of the practices of animal magnetism, "intended to be placed under the eyes of the King and reserved for his Majesty only."[21]

[16]There are two notable exceptions: Tom Beghin, *The Virtual Haydn: Paradox of a Twenty-First-Century Keyboardist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); and Peter Pesic, "Music, Mechanism, and the 'Sonic Turn' in Physical Diagnosis," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 71, no. 2 (2015): 144–72, published as part of Pesic, *Sounding Bodies: Music and the Making of Biomedical Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2022). A scholar on eighteenth-century French literature, John C. O'Neal has also written on Auenbrugger. See "Auenbrugger, Corvisart, and the Perception of Disease," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no. 4 (1998): 473–89.

[17]Stewart Justman, "To Feel What Others Feel: Two Episodes from Eighteenth-Century Medicine," *Medical Humanities* 37, no. 1 (2011): 34–37.

[18]Andrew Steptoe, for example, has explored Mesmer's friendship with Mozart, exploring how the composer ridiculed Mesmer in his opera *Così fan tutte* (1790). Heather Hadlock has focused on Mesmer's fondness for the glass armonica. Mesmer considered this instrument, which has historically been depicted as a physical extension of the female performer, to be the most ideal conductor of magnetism among all instruments. See Andrew Steptoe, "Mozart, Mesmer and *Così fan tutte*," *Music & Letters* 67, no. 3 (1986): 248–55; and Heather Hadlock, "Sonorous Bodies: Women and the Glass Harmonica," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53, no. 3 (2000): 507–42.

[19]Frank Pattie, *Mesmer and Animal Magnetism: A Chapter in the History of Medicine* (Hamilton, NY: Edmonston Publishing, Inc, 1994), 57–63.

[20]See discussions on the publication of the official report in Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 62–66; Claude-Anne Lopez, *Mon Cher Papa: Franklin and the Ladies of Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 17–75; Pattie, *Mesmer and Animal Magnetism*, 142–58; and Helen Thompson, "Gender, or the King's Secret: Franz Anton Mesmer's Magnetic Public Sphere," in *Virtual Gender: Fantasies of Subjectivity and Embodiment*, ed. Mary Ann O'Farrell (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 65–90, at 67–75.

[21]Originally from François Comte Neufchâteau's *Le conservator, ou recoil de morceaux inédits d'histoire, de politique, de literature, et de philosophie* (Paris: Crapelet, 1799), 42–43. Quoted in and translated in Thompson, "Gender, or the King's Secret," 76.

The five-page long secret report, as Helen Thompson puts it, "is terse in stating what it is that makes women not only vulnerable but addicted to the effects of Mesmerism."[22] Identifying the primary causes of magnetic effects as "touch, imagination, and imitation," the commissioners observed that "women are like finely tuned strings wound to the same pitch. When one is put into movement, all the others resonate instantly … as soon as one woman fell into crisis, the others would follow immediately."[23] Commissioners rejected Mesmer's idea precisely because the patients' alleged feelings and dramatic responses stemmed largely from the power of imagination.[24] The claim that female bodies possessed more sensitivity than male bodies was widespread in the eighteenth century. Women, particularly those of the upper class, were generally expected to possess greater degrees of delicacy of sensibility, "often to a point of fragility," as Ann Jessie van Sant explains.[25] The impulse to imitate emotional and agitated responses encouraged by Mesmerism nevertheless contradicted sensibility's emphasis on "naturalness." Mesmerism, as Jessica Riskin describes, became "a kind of caricature of natural science in the sentimental-empiricist idiom" that turned feeling into the measure of truth.[26] When feeling became truth and behaviors became indicators of feeling, Mesmer's patients dramatized sensibility as a performance.

In contrast to Mesmer's controversial practice, Auenbrugger's invention of the percussive technique as a diagnostic method for cardiac and respiratory diseases was far less divisive. His theories, rooted in a medical and musical understanding of sensibility, were summarized in his treatise *Inventum Novum* (1761). Auenbrugger's achievement remains inseparable from his musicality. In *Disease of the Chest*, the doctor Robert Coope drew a comparison between Auenbrugger and the French musician-physician René-Théophile-Hyacinthe Laennec who invented the stethoscope in 1816 to diagnose various chest conditions: "Auenbrugger played on the thorax as though it were a set of percussion instruments: Laënnec added to the thoracic orchestra by using its wind instruments."[27] A portrait of Auenbrugger and his wife by an unknown Austrian painter shows him displaying a copy of *Inventum Novum* proudly while his wife holds a cup of coffee in her hand (Figure 1).[28]

[22]Thompson, "Gender, or the King's Secret," 76.

[23]Ibid., 77–78.

[24]For more about mesmerism as a manipulation of sensibility, see Jessica Riskin, chapter 6 "The Mesmerism Investigation and the Crisis of Sensibilist Science" in *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 189–226.

[25]Ann Jessie van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993),1.

[26]Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility*, 191.

[27]Robert Coope, *Disease of the Chest* (Edinburgh: Livingstone, 1948).

[28]For more about this portrait, see Putti, "Portrait of Leopold Auenbrugger."

Figure 1. Anonymous, *Leopold Auenbrugger with His Wife Marianne* (c. 1765), Istituto Ortopedico Rizzoli, Bologna, Italy. Public domain.

Before Auenbrugger published his findings, the French doctor Théophile de Bordeu, also integrated musical elements into his medical studies, formulating a theory of diagnosis that became, in the words of Anne C. Vila, "the delicate art of tapping the resonances created by sensibility in the body, resonances that resound all the more dramatically when this property is overexerted or pathologically diverted."[29] Bordeu stressed that physicians should develop a sense of rhythm, timbre, melody, form, and harmony. He published *Recherches sur le pouls par rapport aux crises* in 1756, arguing that doctors should possess aural and touch sensitivity to understand different pulse patterns.[30]

In *Inventum Novum*, Auenbrugger sought to demonstrate that a familiarity of sound could improve medical diagnosis, his focus falling on the concept of touch. He defined the physical body as a sounding instrument with diagnostic values, arguing that the human body was like a keyboard instrument, highlighting its percussive nature. He was particularly interested in defining the relationship between the thoracic cavity and the varying percussive resonances of the sound it produces when tapped by fingers. In the "First Observation" of *Inventum Novum*, for example, he explains: "The

[29]Anne C. Vila, "Sensible Diagnostics in Diderot's *La Religieuse*," *Modern Language Notes* 105, no. 4 (1990): 774–99, at 778–79.

[30]Théophile de Bordeu, *Recherches sur le pouls par rapport aux crises*, 3 vols. (Paris: Didot le jeune, 1768–1772). See also Ingrid J. Sykes, "The Art of Listening: Perceiving Pulse in Eighteenth-Century France," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 4 (2012): 473–88.

thorax of a healthy person sounds, when struck." The body in his observation displays the vivid effects of percussive instruments: "The sound thus elicited from the healthy chest, resembles the stifled sound of a drum covered with a thicken woollen cloth or other envelope."[31] The muscle mass, he continues, affects the varieties of sound produced: "The sound is more distinct in the lean, and proportionably duller in the robust; in very fat persons it is almost lost."[32] In his second observation he continues along the same lines: "robust and fat subjects require a stronger percussion … to elicit a degree of sound equal to that produced, by a light percussion, in a lean subject."[33] In analyzing chest diseases "under the sign of morbid resonance," Auenbrugger concludes "the duller the sound … the more severe is the disease," and that "the entire absence of the natural sound … is a fatal sign."[34] Flat sound and silence, in other words, reveal abnormal or even deadly conditions of the body.

Auenbrugger weaves noteworthy musical details like these throughout *Inventum Novum*. He integrates the analogy of a muted drum into his observation of the sound produced by a normal chest, for example: "the sound thus elicited from the healthy chest, resembles the stifled sound of a drum covered with a thick woollen cloth or other envelope."[35] As Peter Pesic has noted, Auenbrugger's description illustrates a knowledge of contemporary drum techniques such as the use of muting cloths called *coperti* which muffles the sound of the timpani.[36]

Auenbrugger's remark that "the thorax ought to be struck, slowly and gently, with the points of the fingers, brought close together and at the same time extended" highlights the importance of finger sensitivity to Auenbrugger, a quality fundamental to keyboard playing.[37] Finger sensitivity was stressed by many performers of the clavichord in Germany, since the instrument requires the fingertip to remain in direct and intimate contact with the keyboard string. The German composer and keyboard pedagogue Daniel Gottlob Türk, known for his treatise *Klavierschule oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen für Lehrer und Lernende*, for instance, instructs clavichord players to avoid activities that could stiffen their fingers.[38] The German poet and musician Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, moreover, argued that the clavichord alone suits adagio movements and "sensitive pieces" precisely

[31]Sigerist, "Percussion of the Chest," 380.
[32]Ibid., 381.
[33]Ibid.
[34]Ibid., 387–88.
[35]Ibid., 380.
[36]Pesic, "Music, Mechanism, and the 'Sonic Turn,'" 161. See also Janet K. Page, "'To Soften the Sound of the Hoboy': The Muted Oboe in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries," *Early Music* 21, no. 1 (1993): 65–80.
[37]Sigerist, "Percussion of the Chest," 381.
[38]Daniel Gottlob Türk, *School of Clavier Playing* [1789], trans. Raymond H. Haggh (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 21.

because of the finger sensitivity the instrument demands.[39] An excellent clavichord player himself,[40] Schubart argued that precise finger control is the most fundamental skill a clavichordist can possess:

> This lonely, melancholic, inexpressibly sweet instrument, when it is made by a master, has advantages over the harpsichord and the fortepiano. By means of the pressure of the finger, by the vibration and *Bebung* of the strings, by the strong or gentler touch of the hand, not only can the natural musical colors be determined, but also the *mezzotinto*, the swelling and fading away of sounds, the breathtaking trill melting away under the fingers, the *portamento* or the *Träger*, in a word, all traits are determined from which feeling is composed. Whoever does not like to thunder, rage, and storm; whose heart often and happily bursts into sweet feelings—let him bypass the harpsichord and fortepiano players, but extremely few clavichordists.[41]

Auenbrugger's emphasis on the sensibility of fingertips is echoed in Hartley's *Observations on Man*. Hartley notes that the "extreme and pointed parts" of the body such as "the extremity of the nose, the uvula, the epiglottis, the nipples, and the ends of the fingers" are not only more easily subject to irritation but also "endued with a greater degree of sensibility than the other parts." He considers this principle congruous with the doctrine of vibrations. In discussing the nervous papillae which are tiny, raised projections on the surface of a tissue, he writes,

> the sensibility of each part does depend, in great measure, on the number, structure, and disposition of the nervous papillae, which are the immediate organ in the senses of feeling, taste, and smell; but then we may remark, that the same observation holds in respect of these nervous papillae. For they are also extreme and pointed parts, and that especially, if we suppose, which seems probable, that when any part is in a state of exquisite sensibility, the nervous papillae are erected … they may also … be made turgid … and thus have their sensibility, or power of receiving vibrations, increased by distention.[42]

In his well-known work *A Treatise on Sympathy*, the London-born and Edinburgh-trained physician Seguin Henry Jackson argued that sensibility usually appears greater in young people rather than in the old.[43] Coupled with the belief that females possessed a higher level of sensibility, younger women, then, could be considered among the most sensitive bodies according to the eighteenth-century point of view. In stressing the value of auditory and touch sensibility, Auenbrugger's thesis accordingly offers a new way to

[39]Ted Alan DuBois, "Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's 'Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst': An Annotated Translation" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1983), 341.

[40]Charles Burney described Schubart as a keyboardist with "great delicacy and expression," commenting that, "his finger is brilliant, and fancy rich … in possession of a perfect double shake, which is obtained but by few harpsichord players." *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and United Provinces*, vol. 1 (London: T. Becket, 1773), 107–8.

[41]DuBois, *Schubart*, 342.

[42]Hartley, *Observations on Man*, vol. 1, 43–44.

[43]Seguin Henry Jackson, *A Treatise on Sympathy* (London: J. Murray, 1781), 20–21.

interpret how young female pianists like his daughters might approach the keyboard music in his days.

The "Auenbrugger" sonatas

When studied in light of Auenbrugger's theories, Haydn's "Auenbrugger" sonatas—dedicated to Auenbrugger's daughters Caterina Franziska and Marianna when they were twenty-five and twenty-one respectively—enhances the eighteenth-century view of the human body as an active instrument. Indeed, Haydn was no stranger to the imagery of man functioning like a string or keyboard instrument, depicting himself as such to his biographer A. C. Dies. When recounting his daily process of improvisation to Dies, he portrayed himself simultaneously as the clavier player and the clavier on which senses and imagination played:

> I must have something to do—usually musical ideas are pursuing me, to the point of torture, I cannot escape them, they stand like walls before me. If it's an allegro that pursues me, my pulse keeps beating faster, I can get no sleep. If it's an adagio, then I notice my pulse beating slowly. My imagination plays on me as if I were a clavier … I am really just a living clavier.[44]

Haydn's "Auenbrugger" sonatas consist of six solo keyboard sonatas (Hob. XVI: 35–39 and 20) and they were his first publication with the prestigious publishing house in Vienna, Artaria. The Auenbrugger sisters appeared frequently in Viennese concerts as well as at their own family musical matinees, hosted on Sunday afternoons during winter seasons. Haydn, who was acquainted with them through these concerts and who gave them lessons, admired Caterina Franziska and Marianna for their musical talent, expressing his high regard for the sisters to Artaria: "The approval of the Demoiselles von Auenbrugger is most important to me, for their way of playing and genuine insight into music equal those of the greatest masters. Both deserve to be known throughout Europe through the public newspapers."[45]

The Auenbrugger sisters were widely recognized by contemporaries for their talent, especially Caterina Franziska. In 1766, Johann Adam Hiller included her name in a list of noteworthy Viennese women whom he considered "skilled at the keyboard." Remarkably, she was only eleven or twelve years old at the time.[46] Leopold Mozart also extolled the sisters' playing, especially Caterina Franziska's. In a letter to his wife dated August 12, 1773, he wrote

[44]Albert Christoph Dies, *Biographische Nachrichten von Joseph Haydn* (Vienna: Camesinaische Buchhandlung, 1810), trans. Vernon Gotwals as "Biographical Accounts of Joseph Haydn," in *Joseph Haydn: Eighteenth-Century Gentleman and Genius* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), 69–209, at 141.

[45]Landon, *The Collected Correspondence and London Notebooks of Haydn* (Fair Lawn, NJ: Essential Books, 1959), 25.

[46]See Irving Godt, *Marianna Martines: A Woman Composer in the Vienna of Mozart and Haydn*, ed. John A. Rice (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 57.

> [Caterina Franziska] is none other than the daughter of Dr. Auenbrugger, or rather his elder daughter. Both of them, and in particular the elder, play extraordinarily well and are thoroughly musical. We dine with them occasionally.[47]

The Berlin critic Friedrich Nicolai also applauded Caterina Franziska's keyboard playing and her ability to sing with "pure intonation and with true affect" after hearing both sisters perform during his visit to Vienna in 1781.

Sadly, Marianna was "prone to illness and of a somewhat crooked build,"[48] and she died young, passing away in 1782 at the age of twenty-three.[49] Following her death, Artaria published the first and only sonata that she composed, *Sonata per il clavicembalo o forte piano* in E-flat major. The sonata was published along with a funeral Ode, "Deh si piacevoli," written by an anonymous "friend and admirer of [Marianna's] rare virtues" and set to music "by her counterpoint teacher Signore Antonio Salieri."[50]

Caterina Franziska meanwhile matured as a "fiery beauty" and was hailed in 1796 as "one of the foremost artists on the *Fortepiano*, which she played not only with accomplishment but also with taste."[51] She married Joseph Freiherr Zois von Edelstein on January 13, 1782, the same year of Marianna's death, and she maintained a tradition of hosting "musical matinées in the winter season on Sundays between 12:00 and 2:00 p.m., which were attended by select company and out-of-town musicians."[52] In the account of the Czech publisher Johann Ferdinand von Schönfeld, Franziska proved herself to be "one of the finest artists on the fortepiano" at these events, but she then stopped performing publicly for a few years.[53]

Max Neuburger presents the tale of how, just as Leopold Auenbrugger used to observe his father tap on the sides of wine barrels to judge their contents, the Auenbrugger sisters might have also grown up watching their father who, wishing to improve his hearing sensitivity, tap and knock different casks to detect their fullness as if the casks were thoraxes. Neuburger, however, has acknowledged that this account lacked documentary evidence.[54] Whether or not the Auenbrugger sisters did observe their father's tapping practice, the "Auenbrugger" sonatas' diverse character and complex rhythmic pattern accentuate, as Leopold Auenbrugger contended, the

[47]Anderson, *Letters of Mozart*, 236.

[48]Quoted in Beghin, *Virtual Haydn*, 180. Originally from Ernst von Lehmann, "Mittheilungen einen Urenkels Auenbrugger's," reproduced in Dr. Conrad Clar, *Leopold Auenbrugger, der Erfinder der Percussion des Brustkorbes, geb. zu Graz 1722, gest. zu Wien 1809, und sein Inventum novum* (Graz: Leuschner und Lubesnky, 1867), 39.

[49]Beghin, *Virtual Haydn*, 182; and Lehmann, "Mittheilungen einen Urenkels Auenbrugger's," 39.

[50]Beghin, *Virtual Haydn*, 181; Pesic suggests the ode was penned by Salieri himself. See Pesic, "Music, Mechanism, and the 'Sonic Turn,'" 161.

[51]A. Peter Brown, *Joseph Haydn's Keyboard Music: Sources and Style* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 25.

[52]Quoted in Beghin, *Virtual Haydn*, 182. Originally from Lehmann, "Mittheilungen einen Urenkels Auenbrugger's," 40.

[53]Beghin, *Virtual Haydn*, 182. Originally from Johann Ferdinand von Schönfeld, *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* [1796], facsimile ed. (Munich and Salzburg: Katzbichler, 1976), 73.

[54]Max Neuburger, *Leopold Auenbrugger und sein Inventum Novum: eine historische Skizze* (Vienna: M. Salzer, 1922), 11.

importance of touch delicacy as a mark of sensibility. Not only so, but they also attest that sensibility, which refers to a person's capacity to be affected and moved, allows one to experience or even sympathize with all sorts of feelings. Haydn produced solo keyboard sonatas prolifically and had dedicated many of them to women in his orbit. The six sonatas dedicated to Auenbrugger sisters were different from other sonata sets that he composed in that each of the individual sonatas bear strikingly dissimilar characteristics from one another. Every other female dedicatee was offered sonatas that are largely unified by one dominant character or persona. For example, Hob. XVI: 40–42, which were dedicated to Princess Marie Esterházy, are associated with contemporary feminine ideals of sensibility such as innocence and politeness, as promoted in sentimental novels and female conduct-books.[55] The "London" sonatas, Hob. XVI: 50 and 52, dedicated to the English female virtuoso Theresa Jansen (and also Magdalena von Kurzböck for the latter), are full of irony, humor, jest, and virtuosic brilliance, and Hob. XVI: 51, which is dedicated to Maria Hester Park, is short and musically simplistic.[56] Unlike these sonatas ruled by a single characteristic, the "Auenbrugger" set is musically diverse.

This musical diversity proves to be significant in demonstrating the nature, meaning, and manifestations of sensibility. A feminized culture of sensibility emerged in the eighteenth century particularly in Britain and ideals including innocence, shyness, and politeness, which could be more readily perceived in the set dedicated to Princess Marie, were often associated with women.[57] Nevertheless, the operation of sensibility could not be limited to a certain type of sentiment according to eighteenth-century understanding, as the "Auenbrugger" set helps illustrate. The eighteenth-century Scottish writer and philosopher, Henry Home, Lord Kames argued that sensibility encompasses both negative and positive emotions and that, "delicacy of taste necessarily heightens our sensibility of pain and pleasure, and of course our sympathy, which is the capital branch of every social passion."[58] Diderot, who considered madness to be the final state of unrestrained sensibility, outlined a wide range of emotions that a man or woman of sensibility might experience:

> Sensibility . . . that disposition which accompanies organic weakness, which follows on easy affection of the diaphragm, on vivacity of imagination, on delicacy of nerves, which enlaces one to being compassionate, to being horrified, to

[55]See a discussion of Hob. XVI: 40 and 42 in relation to the ideals of innocence and politeness in the culture of sensibility in Keri Hui, "Choreographing Sensibility: Innocence and Politeness in Haydn's Hob. XVI: 40 and 42," *Music & Letters* 102, no. 3 (2021): 482–506.

[56]See more about this sonata in Thomas Tolley, "Haydn, the Engraver Thomas Park, and Maria Hester Park's 'Little Sonat,'" *Music & Letters* 82, no. 3 (2001): 421–31.

[57]See G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[58]Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, vol. 1 (London: A. Millar; Edinburgh: Kincaid and Bell, 1763), 10.

> admiration, to fear, to being upset, to tears, to fainting . . . to loss of self-control . . . . to having no clear notion of what is true, good, and fine, to being unjust, to going mad.[59]

Several leading eighteenth-century music theorists considered that the sonata was the most effective instrumental genre for conveying sentimental range. The German professor and philosopher Johann Georg Sulzer, argued that "no form other than the sonata may assume any character and every expression."[60] He described the variety of sentiments that a sonata could convey, comparing it to a monologue or conversation:

> In a sonata, the composer might want to express through the music a monologue marked by sadness, misery, pain, or of tenderness, pleasure and joy; using a more animated kind of music, he might want to depict a passionate conversation between similar or complementary characters.[61]

In comparing the sonata to the ode, moreover, Türk asserted that "in the sonata . . . every motion and passion can be expressed in it."[62]

The "Auenbrugger" sonatas exemplify how a set of sonatas possess the capacity to express different sentiments. Cheerful sentiments, for example, penetrate Hob. XVI: 35 in C major, which opens the set with playful charm. Hob. XVI: 37 also begins immediately in a spirit of gayety with a buoyant and vivacious *Allegro con brio*. Alongside these brightly natured sonatas, Haydn also included Hob. XVI: 20, which is permeated with melancholy.[63] Haydn described this sonata as "the longest and most difficult" out of the whole set.[64]

The individual movements of Hob. XVI: 35–39 and Hob. XVI: 20 also place remarkably distinct moods and personalities on display. Such "fragmentedness" has led contemporary Haydn scholar Tom Beghin to hear the Auenbrugger sonatas not as a set of six three-movement sonatas but rather as an array of eighteen movements of dissimilar character that oscillate between the cheerful and the serious.[65] Rhythmic diversity also participates in the communication of various sentiments while recalling the pulse sensitivity emphasized by Auenbrugger. Musicologist John Irving argues that Haydn's sonatas often display rhythmic variety even at the local level, remarking that

[59]Diderot, *The Paradox of Acting* [1830], trans. Walter Herries Pollock (London: Chatto & Windus, 1883), 56.

[60]Nancy Baker and Thomas Christensen, *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment: Selected Writings of Johann Georg Sulzer and Heinrich Christoph Koch* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 103.

[61]Ibid., 103–4.

[62]Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, 383.

[63]See an exploration of this melancholy and religious sensibility in relation to the sigh topic in Keri Hui, "Sensibility in Haydn's Topical Art," *Journal of Musicology* 39, no. 4 (2022): 432–68.

[64]Landon, *Collected Correspondence*, 24.

[65]See Beghin, "An Opus for the Insightful World," in *The Virtual* Haydn, 169–218.

"while it would certainly be going too far to describe Haydn's as 'disjointed' [his music] is not especially idiomatic, tending instead to proceed in a succession of fragmentary gestures, each on sharply characterised in some way (particularly in diversity of rhythm)." Irving points to the "Auenbrugger" sonatas as exemplars of such features: "In such a style the motives acquire memorability as much by local contrast as by intrinsic identity … Haydn's 'Auenbrugger' sonatas of 1780 contain good illustrations of this kind of expositions … whose diversity is particularly remarkable."[66]

Some noteworthy examples which reveal the diversity in character, touch, and rhythm in the Auenbrugger sonatas are found in the first and third movements of Hob. XVI: 36, written in C-sharp minor, an unusual key that was rarely used in eighteenth-century keyboard music.[67] The first movement, *Moderato*, announces its solemnity through opening forte unisons with ornamental turns that suggest heroic or masculine sentiments. In the words of Elaine Sisman, these turns convey a sort of call to attention "from the court, town, battlefield, or oracular voice" (Example 1).[68] The assertive and weighty eighth notes are quickly superseded by soft repeated G-sharp eighth notes, requiring a gentle touch, followed by a quarter-note G sharp ornamented with a delicate turn. The left hand then answers this opening gesture with mellow chromatic thirds that demand a light touch. Such swift shifts through varying articulations and textures, consisting of both long and short as well as sharp and gentle taps, requires flexibility and responsiveness. This opening, in other words, hints at a sort of sensibility that denotes both "quickness of sensation" and "quickness of perception."[69]

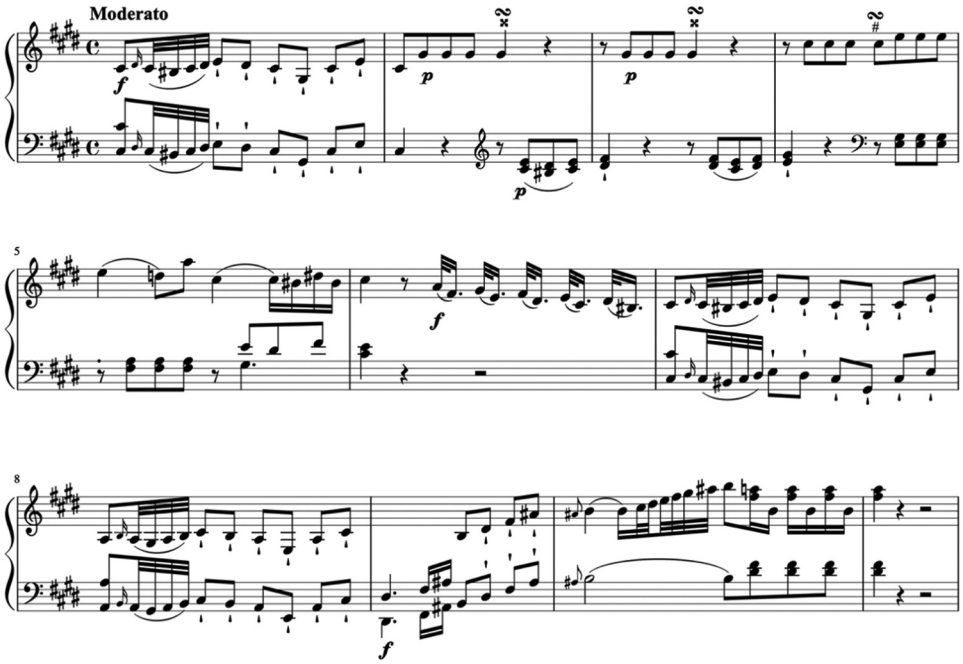
This movement is also distinguished by its incorporation of irregular thematic phrasings that are permeated with Scotch Snaps or Lombard rhythms. Intruding dramatically in *forte* after the eighth rest in measure 6, the falling Lombardic gestures reintroduce the opening eighths in measure 7. The chain of arpeggiated B-major dominant sevenths in measure 9 consist of forceful eighth notes and a thirty-second note flourish that leads to three bright, powerful repeated broken chords. In the recapitulation, the Lombardic rhythm continues to dominate by expanding into a short robust episode in measures 73 through 78 following the return of the primary theme

[66]John Irving, *Mozart's Piano Sonatas: Contexts, Sources, Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 44.

[67]It might be argued that the four sharps of Hob. XVI: 36's C-sharp minor countered the prevalent view that women could only play "easy" pieces. Diderot once asked C.P.E. Bach and Friedrich Melchior Grimm to compose sonatas in "difficult keys" for his daughter, whom he deemed talented enough to play such works. Quoted in Matthew Head, "'If the Pretty Little Hand Won't Stretch': Music for the Fair Sex in Eighteenth-Century," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52, no. 2 (1999): 203–54, at 212. Originally from Hans-Gunter Ottenberg, *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*, trans. Philip J. Whitmore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 223.

[68]Elaine Sisman, "Symphonies and the Public Display of Topics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 90–117, at 115.

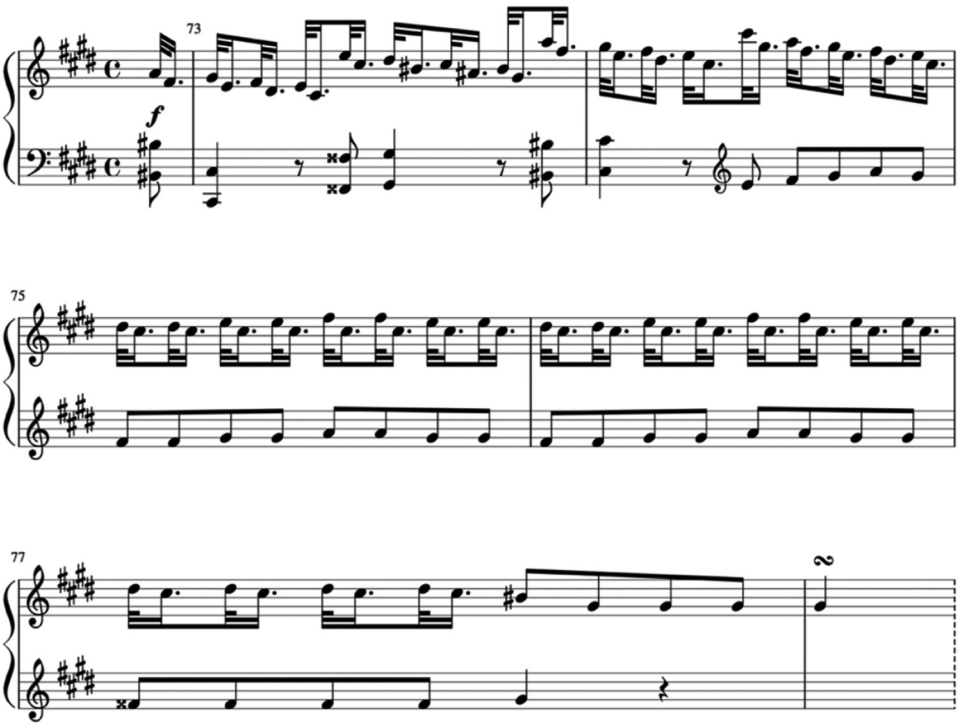
[69]Johnson, *Dictionary*, vol. 2, 305.



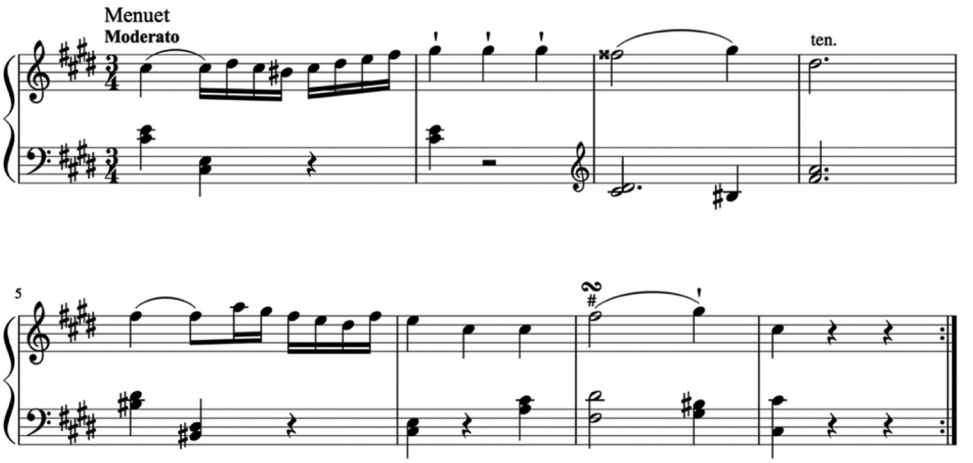
Example 1. Haydn, Keyboard Sonata in C-sharp Minor, Hob. XVI: 36, I, mm. 1–11.

(Example 2). The left hand initially supports the restless Lombardic rhythm with octaves, but in measure 74, it shifts into a succession of single eighth notes that call for careful and persistent tapping before the music returns to the soft repeated eighth notes.

The third movement of Hob. XVI: 36 contains an exquisite minuet that contrasts strikingly with the first-movement *Moderato*. Like that movement, the A theme (mm. 1–8 and 24–31) is also written in C-sharp minor. Far from conveying the heavy and somber character of the first movement, the melody here entices the ear with a dainty and mesmerizing sound. This minuet begins with turning and rising sixteenth notes that require the keyboardist to use pointed fingers and minimal movement. Confined to the high register, the right hand of the delicate antecedent phrase (mm. 1–4) moves in small intervals that are confined to a perfect fifth. The melody is set in stepwise motion except for the perfect fourth leap from G sharp to D sharp. The three repeated detached G-sharp quarter notes require tactful pressing of the finger flesh that allows a faint change of timber. The F double sharp vibrates as an appoggiatura for two beats, alluring with dissonance, particularly through the tritone effect achieved by the lower C sharp and upper F double sharp. The D sharp in *tenuto* also ushers in a peculiar tone color change (Example 3). Despite its short length, this movement

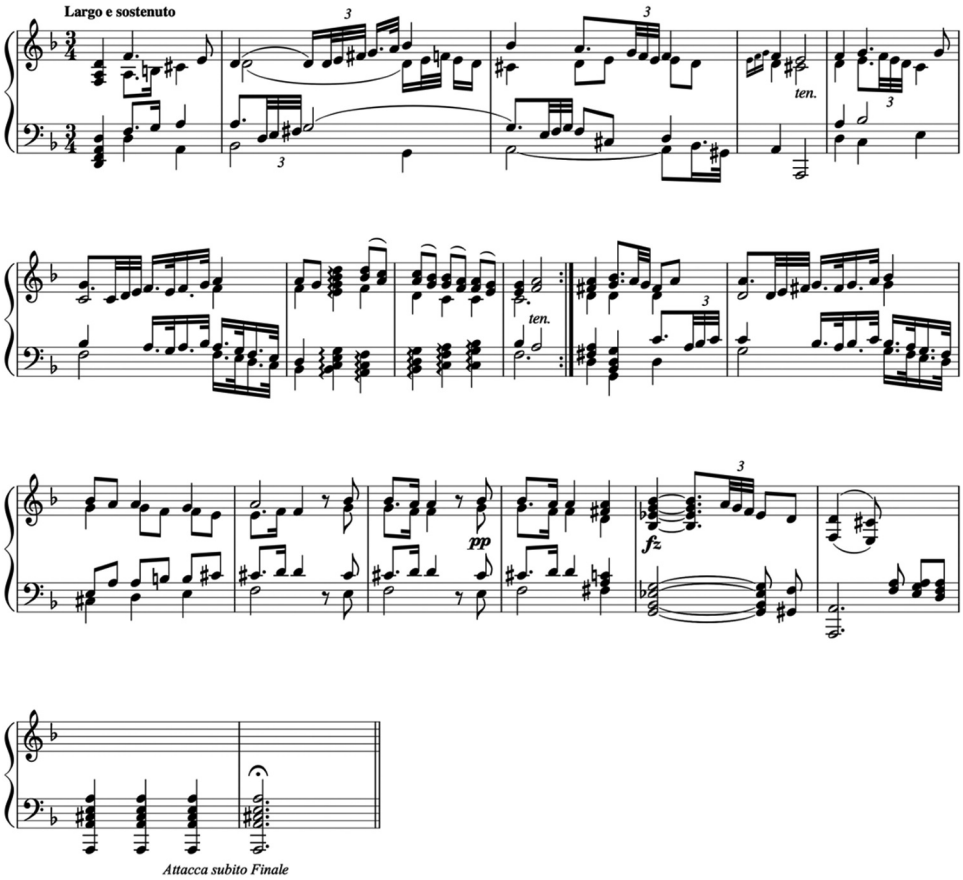


Example 2. Haydn, Hob. XVI: 36, I, mm. 73–78.



Example 3. Haydn, Hob. XVI: 36, III, mm. 1–8.

foregrounds finger delicacy—which is largely responsible for creating the subtle shades—as a primary indication of sensibility.



Example 4. Haydn, Keyboard Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI: 37, II.

The stunning *Largo e sostenuto* of Hob. XVI: 37 places yet another mood on display. Distinguished by a regal seriousness that is poles apart from the brilliant liveliness of the first movement, this movement opens with a tonic chord that conveys a dignified sentiment (Example 4). The entire movement exemplifies the learned style with its thick and gripping polyphonic texture filled with suspensions and harmonic complexities.[70] In addition to triplets in slow tempo, resolute dotted rhythms also run through the movement. These dotted rhythms embody what Heinrich Christoph Koch described as "the expression of the elevated" which "requires a relatively slow movement, a very noticeable and strongly marked rhythm, and more dotted than slurred notes … a full and strong … harmony, and extremely strong accentuation of

[70]See more about the learned style in Keith Chapin, "Learned Style and Learned Styles," in *Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, 301–29.

the notes."[71] Additionally, they reinforce Johann Joachim Quantz's observation that "dotted and sustained notes express the serious and the pathetic; long notes, such as semibreves or minims, intermingled with quick ones express the majestic and sublime."[72] The sequence of slurred suspensions in measures 7 and 8 result in a series of heavy falling sighs that, padded in thirds and buttressed by arpeggiated chords, display earnestness with a tinge of sorrow. Although these chords eventually settle on F major in measure 9, the D major chord following the repeat sign ushers in another change of tone color, bringing the music into the key of G minor.

This movement may be heard as a noble hybridization of the French overture and the Sarabande, both of which are rooted in the Baroque tradition. The French overture is typified by the use of dotted rhythms, an imitative contrapuntal texture, frequent suspensions, and a slow tempo. The eighteenth-century German music theorist Johann Adolph Scheibe associated the French overture with the idea of manliness, arguing that its opening must "arouse throughout a noble vivacity, a serious, manly, and pompous character, and above all a continuous fire." While the French overture is usually set in 2/2 or 4/4, the meter of the Sarabande is 3/4. The Sarabande often displays a halting character with an emphasis on the second beat, as well as a serious quality. This movement confirms that sensibility, even when performed by female hands like the Auenbruggers', is not restricted to eighteenth-century feminine ideals like innocence, tenderness, or charm. It is also capable of the heavier sentiments which were less frequently identified with women.

Sympathetic bodies as musical instruments

There are still many more musical examples from the six Auenbrugger sonatas that place the heterogeneousness of this set on display. This music, characterized by a diversity of sentiments, unsettles eighteenth-century gendered expectations of what music dedicated to female performers should or could sound like. The set further reinforces the metaphor of the instrumental body: performers like Caterina Franziska or Marianna who could sympathetically feel and express various types of sentiments may indeed be described as living claviers. Even the feminist philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft wrote in *Cave of Fancy* (1787) that the sensibility is the "result of acute senses, finely-fashioned nerves, which vibrate at the slightest touch, and convey such clear intelligence to the brain, that it does

[71]Quoted in Clive McClelland, *Ombra: Supernatural Music in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Lexington Books, 2012), 9. Also in Birgitte Moyer, "'Ombra' and Fantasia in Late Eighteenth-Century Theory and Practice," in *Convention in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Music: Essays in Honor of Leonard G. Ratner*, ed. W. J. Allanbrook, J. M. Levy, and W.P. Mahrt (New York: Pendragon Press, 1992), 283–306, at 292. Originally from Heinrich Christoph Koch's "Leidenschaft" in *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt: August Hermann der Jüngere, 1802).

[72]Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute* [1752], trans. Edward R. Reilly (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2001), 125–26. Quoted also in McClelland, *Ombra*, 9.

not require to be arranged by the judgment."[73] Sensibility operates precisely through the nerves of sensitive performers, which resemble vibrating strings of musical instruments.

The sensitive body, then, also becomes the antithesis of a mechanical manner of playing that was opposed by leading eighteenth-century composers and theorists. In objecting to mechanical playing, C.P.E Bach employed the metaphor of a trained bird and argued that a true performer plays from the soul.[74] This imagery also appears in Türk's treatise where he writes that the "trained bird" who "whistles his little piece either better or worse according to whether his master has whistled it better or worse for him" is the apathetic player who can only play by a "borrowed" feeling or with "mechanical limitation." This mechanical performer, in Türk's words, lacks "personal and genuine feeling for all the emotions and passions which can be expressed in music."[75] Türk holds that the true musician, unlike what he calls the "drilled musician," can identify with every affect and respond to every passion or emotion expressed in music.[76] Koch similarly warns young musicians against playing in a mechanical manner:

> Now you young artists who read these pages for instruction … may your single aim be to please your listeners through beautiful feelings … do not hanker after the applause of the masses, because for you too Gellert wrote the fine fable: "The Nightingale and the Cuckoo." You too should learn to feel what means[:]
>
> *The escape of a silent tear, Brings (to true artists) far more glory, Than loud applause.*
>
> If you have attained a high degree of skill on your instrument, if the execution of even the greatest difficulties comes to you easily, all the better for you. Good taste does not require you never to show off your skill. Only use it with taste, and beware of seeking approval merely through virtuosity, else you resemble the buffoon, who gets applause for mere mechanical skill. [77]

Performers, of course, are first and foremost listeners by nature, and according to Koch, listeners may be divided into three groups according to their levels of sensibility. There are those who own "neither ear nor heart for the effect of music"; those who remain unlikely to be affected because they have already been "overpowered by a definite sentiment or passion"; and those who are receptive to the music with hearts "open to every beautiful sentiment" and both souls and nerves attuned accordingly.[78] Mozart's critique of

[73]Mary Wollstonecraft, *Posthumous Works of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin*, vol. 3 (Clifton, N.J.: A. M. Kelley, 1972), 135.

[74]C.P.E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. and ed. William J. Mitchell (London: W. W. Norton & Co, 1974), 150.

[75]Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, 359.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Baker and Christensen, *Aesthetics*, 154.

[78]Ibid., 145–46.

Clementi continues a similar thought, showing disdain for machine-like performances deprived of sensibility. On January 12, 1782, after his competition with Clementi, Mozart wrote to the guardian of Constanze, whom he later married: "Clementi plays well, so far as execution with the right hand goes. His greatest strength his passages in thirds. Apart from this, he has not a kreutzer's worth of feeling or taste—in short he is simply a *mechanicus*."[79] Mozart also complained to his father,

> Now a word about Clementi. He is an excellent cembalo-player, but that is all. He has great facility with his right hand. His star passages are thirds. Apart from this, he has not a farthing's worth of taste or feeling; he is a mere *mechanicus*.[80]

For Mozart, what sounded mechanical was not only Clementi's playing but also his compositions. In 1820, Clementi was praised for having composed a sonata that proves "his sensibility even more exalted, and his judgment now bearing the fullest fruits of maturity."[81] But Mozart in the 1780s heard Clementi's sonatas as proof of insensibility and tastelessness:

> Well, I have a few words to say to my sister about Clementi's sonatas. Everyone who either hears them or plays them must feel that as compositions they are worthless. They contain no remarkable or striking passages except those in sixths and octaves. And I implore my sister not to practise these passages too much, so that she may not spoil her quiet, even touch and that her hand may not lose its natural lightness, flexibility and smooth rapidity. For after all what is to be gained by it? Supposing that you do play sixths and octaves with the utmost velocity (which no one can accomplish, not even Clementi) you only produce an atrocious chopping effect and nothing else whatever. Clementi is a *ciarlatano*, like all Italians. He writes Presto over a sonata or even Prestissimo and Alia breve, and plays it himself Allegro in 4/4 time. I know this is the case, for I have heard him do so. What he really does well are his passages in thirds; but he sweated over them day and night in London. Apart from this, he can do nothing, absolutely nothing, for he has not the slightest expression or taste, still less, feeling.[82]

Sensibility privileges genuine feeling, which mechanical playing lacks. The broad spectrum of sentiments involved in the "Auenbrugger" set provides a means for sensitive performers to present sensibility as the quality without which one cannot feel and execute every type of sentiment. The diverse musical and rhythmic characteristics illustrate how ideal sensitive bodies—like those of the Auenbrugger sisters—could be interpreted as living keyboards that are both percussive and stringed. Such sensible performers, in the musical context of the culture of sensibility, stand superior to mechanical players; their bodies are being percussed delicately by various sentiments while their nervous fibers are

[79]Anderson, *Letters of Mozart*, vol. 3, 1180.
[80]Ibid., 1181.
[81]*The London Magazine, July to December, 1820*, vol. 2 (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1820), 97.
[82]Anderson, *Letters of Mozart*, vol. 3, 1267.

plucked by sensations. But what good does reviving this eighteenth-century metaphor that conceptualizes sensitive bodies as both percussive and stringed instruments do today? A renewed appreciation for this idea serves not so much a theoretical or epistemological purpose. Pedagogues often encourage students to make their instruments "sing," and the idea that instruments ought to imitate the human voice is nothing new. In the eighteenth century many such as Haydn and Mattheson also recommended that composers learn vocal singing to augment their sensitivity to melodic beauty.[83] Yet to know how to make the instrument "sing" requires sensibility in both hearing and touch, or else this metaphor can easily collapse into just another vague and ambiguous advice of musicking. In informing us how the eighteen century viewed the sensible man, the idea that sympathetic bodies with sensitive souls are similar to responsive musical-medical instruments reshapes the way we think about our engagement with musical instruments in performance. It increases musicians'—particularly keyboard players'—awareness of how to use the body while simultaneously heightening our receptiveness of the delicate details that we come in contact within our everyday life.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

[83]See Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, 257, and Griesinger, *Biographische Notizen*, 61.