
Antonin Reicha's didactic cycles: between theory and practice

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Abstract: Antonin Reicha (1770-1826) was a reputed Czech composer, theorist and teacher, who studied in Germany, and was naturalized French, who composed numerous musical works in different genres and wrote several treatises on different aspects of the sound art. An important place in Reicha's artistic heritage is occupied by the didactic cycles, which represent examples of works that happily combine instructional and artistic purposes, being developed as a support for the composer's didactic activity and at the same time as a supplement to his theoretical writings. The author emphasizes repeatedly that the theory must be justified by practice and that the student must know the principles of the contemporary composition and not just the old rules by which the predecessors were guided. This article examines Reicha's didactic cycles, among which we find collections of fugues, variations, duets and trios, as well as some collections of studies. Considering the large number of works named by Reicha *Studies* he can rightly be considered one of the parents of this genre in French music. But in Reicha's case, the aim of the studies is not only to cultivate virtuosity itself, but rather complex exercises that involve both the "technological" processes of interpretation and the "spiritual" ones. In our opinion, the figure of this musician, his theoretical writings and compositional works eloquently illustrate the dialectical relationship between tradition and innovation on the one hand and the complex relationship between musical theory and practice on the other.

Keywords: didactic cycle, duet, fugue, A. Reicha, study, trio, variations.

1. Introduction

Known especially for his friendship with Beethoven and for his substantial contribution to the creation of the quintet for wind instruments and the formation of literature for this type of ensemble, today Antonin Reicha is becoming a name that is increasingly arousing performers' curiosity (and not just those who play wind instruments) and researchers' interest thanks to his work that includes creations in different musical genres gathered in 107 opera: symphonies, concerts, instrumental ensembles for different components (duo, trio, string quartets, quintets for wind instruments), opera, vocal-symphonic cycles. Reicha was also a reputed theorist and teacher who wrote several treatises on different aspects of musical art. His students include such famous

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personalities of universal music culture as Franz Liszt and Hector Berlioz, Charles Gounod and César Franck. Some of his theoretical work exposes experimental methods of composition, which he applied in his own creation.

2. Didactic cycles for composers and instrumentalists

Didactic cycles occupy an important place in Reicha's artistic heritage: 12 small duets for two flutes, 10 studies for piano, 36 fugues for piano, *L'Art de varier*, 24 trios for horns, 34 studies in the fugal genre for piano etc. These cycles are examples of works that happily combine instructional and artistic purposes, being developed as a support for Reicha's teaching activity and, at the same time, as a supplement to his theoretical writings.

2.1. Practical examples - a treatise contribution to the intellectual culture of the composer

The treatise *Practische Beispiele: ein Beitrag zur Geisteskultur des Tonsetzers... begleitet mit philosophisch-practicischen Anmerkungen zu den prattischen Beispelen* (Practical examples: Contribution to the composer's intellectual culture with philosophical-practical notes and practical examples) was written in 1803 and is currently preserved in the manuscript at the National Library of France (Mss. no. 2496, 2510). This treatise "presents ideas on the relationship between music, society, the state and religion, and makes considerations on the theory of harmony and modulation, predicting the importance the latter would play during the nineteenth century. The work examines various forms, genres and experimental procedures such as bitonality and polyrhythm" (Landey, 2000, p. IX), illustrated in 24 very difficult sight-reading exercises, especially composed for this treatise. "The text shows that Reicha foresaw how the art of modulation would pervade the new epoch and it reveals his predilection for mathematics and the philosophy of Kant" (Stone, 1990, p. 696). The manuscript consists of two parts. The first, as stated by Canadian musicologist J.-P. Despines – "offers not very practical solutions to a number of problems related to aesthetics and music theory" (Despines, 1977, p. 29). In these pages Reicha addresses certain topics that are more about the general culture and the intellectual-philosophical preparation of future composers, considering that they must possess a vast culture and deep philosophical knowledge. The author shares his ideas about the influence that music can have on people's happiness, mentions the role of mathematics in musical art. How valid is Reicha's observation that "only in a state with a great culture will music be able to occupy its true place" (quoted by Despines, 1977, p. 29)! The second part of the treaty features practical exercises for piano, divided in three groups: the first includes polyrhythmic exercises (in different measures in the two-handed parties), the second - the polytonality (different tones in the two-handed parties) and the third – exercises noted on three or four

handsets written in different clefs (*G*-clef, *F*-clef and *C*-clef) that require knowledge and sight-reading skills in all clefs. In addition to these “oddities” for the respective period, there are also the complex measures in which some exercises are performed, as well as the fugue exposure (in no. 10, 22) that anticipates the writing of the 36 fugues for piano published two years later. Many of these exercises seem to be difficult acrobatics for interpretation, but once passed they ensure the formation of dexterities in the reading of musical scores and can serve as evidence of a rather advanced level of sight-reading in the musical circles of which Reicha belonged. Some of the exercises written for this treaty were subsequently taken up in the collection of studies op. 30 dating from the period of the first Parisian stay of the composer and also published there in 1801, in the cycle of 36 fugues for piano, others, such as *Fantasy for piano in C-moll* or *Fantasy on a single chord* – published as stand-alone pieces.

2.2. Studies for piano

Studies or *Exercises for piano-forte* op. 30 “organized in a new way”, as the author himself confesses on the title page, include 20 pieces equally divided into two notebooks. The collection opens with a preface in which Reicha sets out the main ideas that have served to compose this cycle, whose purpose is to make it more enjoyable to practice elements indispensable to any study of the piano: games, broken chords (arpeggios), thirds, octaves etc. The 10 studies in the first book carry names that indicate on the processes underlying them, while the studies on the second book carry only indications of tempo and tone without specifying on which element the attention of the author is directed.

Part I contains the following studies:

1. The twelve major scales. *Allegro* (*E*-dur)
2. The twelve minor scales. *Fantezie. Un poco allegro* (*a*-moll)
3. The chromatic scale. *Allegro* (*g*-moll)
4. The Cadences. *Allegretto* (*C*-dur)
5. The ornaments. *Largo* (*C*-dur)
6. The broken chords (*Fis*-dur)
7. The thirds. *Allegro moderato* (*C*-dur)
8. The clefs. *Larghetto* (*E*-dur)
9. The octaves. *Allegro* (*c*-moll)
10. The Enharmonism. *Andante sostenuto* (*Ges*-dur și *Fis*-dur)

Part II include:

11. *Adagio molio et sostenuto* (*Es*-dur)
12. *Allegro poco vivace* (*B*-dur)
13. *Andante un poco adagio* (*D*-dur)

14. *Allegro un poco vivace* (combined metres) (G-dur)
15. *Andante* (Es-dur)
16. *Allegretto* (G-dur)
17. *Un poco largo*. Armonie (E-dur)
18. *Allegro* (C-dur)
19. Fugue. *Allegro moderato* (f-moll)
20. *Adagio molto* (C-dur)

Each of the two parties initially has some comments that would facilitate the study of exercises. For example, the author includes here preparatory exercises for study no. 3, dedicated to the chromatic range, decrypts the ornaments used in study no. 5, proposes the variant noted in the ordinary clefs (G and F) of exercise no. 8, where he uses the right-hand handset the three C-clefs (tenor, alto and soprano) and the G-clef, elaborating with their help a capricious mosaic.



Fig. 1a *Studies op. 30, no. 8*



Fig. 1b Same study deciphered in ordinary clefs

In the comments to Part II, Reicha notes that the tempo indications are not absolute values, each student being free to start the study in a comfortable tempo and to gradually accelerate it by bringing it in line with the author's vision. Also, here the composer provides additional explanations for the correct interpretation of the combined metres (used in study no. 14), recommends the practice of fugue (study no. 19), initially in a slower tempo – *Adagio* and later the passage to the *Allegro moderato* tempo indicated in the score. In order to train the reading ability of larger scores, study no. 20 is noted on four staves in

different clefs, two of which (the upper ones) assuming to be performed with the right hand, and the lower ones – with the left hand.



Fig. 2 *Studies op. 30, no. 20*

This cycle of studies represents the author's attempt to diversify the didactic literature so that students concerned with the training and improvement of the interpretative technique will not get bored, exercising infinitely only games and arpeggios or some banal exercises. The studies alternate apparently without any system: the fast ones are followed by the slow ones, the ones with an introverted character follow one another with the extroverted ones, the light ones – with the difficult ones. “Perhaps most surprising and original is that he puts different textures and styles side by side – fugue, broken chords, slow fantasy-like movements, variation, toccata-like textures, exercises in different clefs.” (Löwenmark, 2018, p. 8) This collection would be as interesting and useful to future composers as to future pianists, as the compositional aspects of the studies are often even more important than technical ones, even if the work is explicitly addressed to pianists and thus Reicha's studies op. 30 appear to be precursors of cycles of the 20th century, as, for example, *Microcosmos* by Béla Bartók or *Endless Book* by Dan Voiculescu. In this context, we cannot disagree with musicologist A. Ramaut, who notes that Reicha's studies go beyond “the purely digital aspect, becoming brain exercises in which the hand is only an agent of intelligence” (Ramaut, 2005, p. 77).

In the list of A. Reicha's works under the oppus number 31 there is a *Transition Study and two Fantasies for Piano (Étude de transitions et deux Fantaisies pour piano, Paris, 1802)* which, in fact, is a modulation exercise, implementing not only the interpretative aspect of piano art, but especially the compositional-creative one, which, in turn, according to researcher D. Gultsova, is part of the semantics of the concept of “technique” (Gultsova,

2014, p. 180). Unfortunately, we did not find access to this score for a more detailed analysis.

2.3. 36 Fugues for piano – the first polyphonic cycle after the *Well Tempered Clavier* by J.S. Bach

The 36 Fugues for piano written during the years 1802-1803 in Vienna were conceived as an illustration of the Neue Fugensystem, that is to say a new system of composing the fugues in which Reicha uses so many themes that, through their gender traits, they are closer to themes of *Allegri*, *Menuete* or *Scherzo* (for example, no. 1, 20, 25), as answers at different intervals (in no. 12, 21, 25, 26 – at a third / sixth; in no. 32 – at a second, at no. 20 – at triton (Fig. 3), sometimes involving quite distant tones, for example in fugue no. 21 the theme sounds in *C*-dur, the answer - in *E*-dur, in no. 22 the theme sounds in *A*-dur, the answer – in *C*-dur, in no. 12 the theme in *A*-dur, the answer in *F*-dur, Fig. 4).



Fig. 3 Fugue no. 20



Fig. 4 Fugue no. 12

In some fugues we find themes that through the chromatic towers of the melody, through the freer treatment of dissonances foreshadow romantic themes (for example, fugues no. 11, no. 29), others, on the contrary, being absolutely traditional for the fugal genre, are written in the spirit of the great pre-classical masters (no. 10, 17, 31). The thematism of the fugues is quite varied, both through the intonational content, by the rhythmic and metric structure of the themes, as well as by the dimensions of the themes: from one measure (no. 17) to 8-12 measures (no. 25, no. 29).

In the fugues of this collection we observe tonal planes that go beyond the circle of diatonic-kinship tonalities traditional for the fugues of those times (no. 20, 21, 22 and so on). Some fugues in this cycle have open tonal compositions, beginning in one tonality and ending in another (e.g. no. 20, 26, 30). In fugue no. 8, called *Circles harmonique* after the exposition (in which we find an answer in reverse), the subject and the answer gradually descend downwards for major seconds, going through the whole circle of major tones placed on the range through tones (*D-dur*, *C-dur*, *B-dur*, *As-dur*, *Fis-dur* and *E-dur*). Fugue no. 13 (Fig. 5) is a modal leak conceived in a new harmonic system, only on white keys, with diatonic modulations through the agreements of the natural harmonic system and with cadences in all diatonic modes (except the initial ionic) located on the circle of words (V, II, VI, III, IV).

Allegro moderato

giocosamente e ben accentuato, non troppo legato

Fig. 5 Fugue no. 13

Fugue no. 29, by analogy with fugue no. 8, could be called a harmonic spiral, because the nine exposures of the theme form three segments of a spiral, separated from each other by the same interlude by two measures that sound in

different tones. Each next segment is located at a higher quarter than the preceding one and consists of three features of the theme at a large third forming an enlarged segment: *d-fis-b*; *g-h-es*; *c-e-gis*. After a cadence in *Gis-dur*, the most distant tonality of the initial *d-moll*, the composer, through enharmonic sequences and modulations, returns to the basic tonality, affirming it through a cadence based on the first motif of the theme that sounds on the tonic pedal, being followed by an accordion code in *d-moll*.

We also find a novel tonal plan in the last fugue, no. 36. The subject itself is constructed by transposing the basic motif on the semitones upwards - from the sounds *c*, *des*, *d*, *es*, thus implying very distant tones for the initial *C-dur* (Fig. 6). Later, the answers in the exposition will sound in the *F-dur* and *As-dur* tones (each containing the same transposition to the semitones, so that during the exposition the basic motive of the subject sounds in 11 different tones). In development, the theme is resumed in the *F-dur*, *G-dur*, *B-dur* tones, eventually returning to the basic *C-dur* tone.

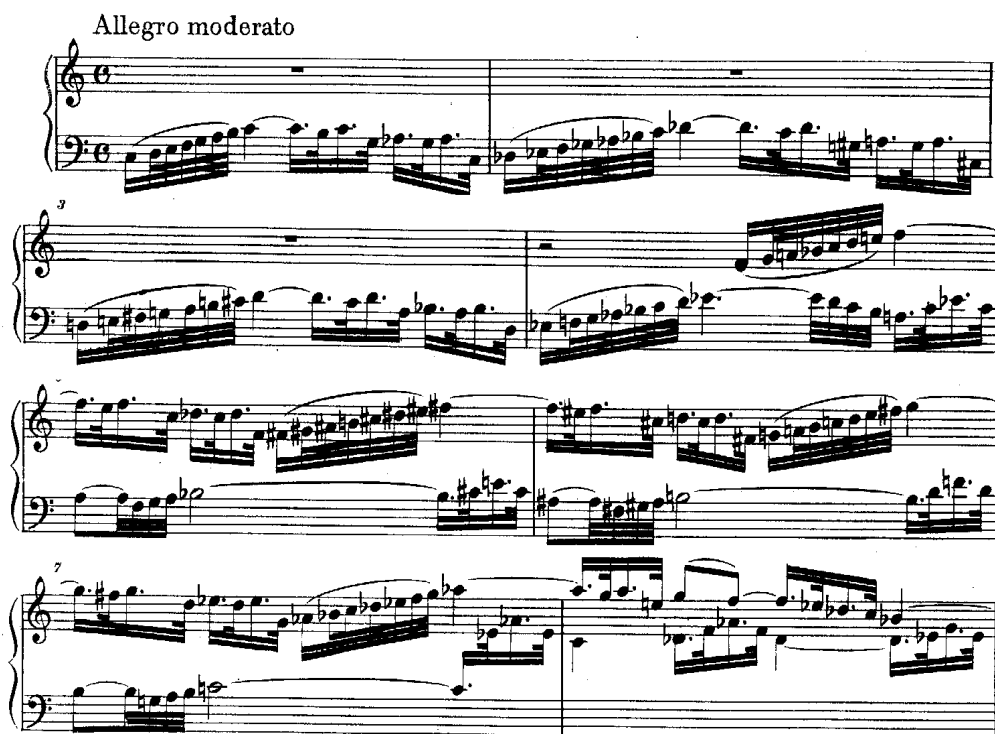


Fig. 6 Fugue no. 36

The fugues in this cycle feature a variety of unique technical procedures, extremely complicated and new for the respective period, such as polyrhythm (triple fugue no. 30 in which two of the themes are in meter 4/2 and one in

meter 3/4, Fig. 7), combined meter (no. 24, 28), asymmetrical meter (5/8 in no. 20) etc., the author motivating their use by referring to folklore practice, thus anticipating directly searches by composers from the 20th century, such as B. Bartók. Six fugues are written on two themes, one is triple, and no. 15 contains six subjects.

Fig. 7 Fugue no. 30

In most fugues on several themes, only the first is a theme, with heavy and expressive melodic intonations, the others are less individualized. In fugue no. 15, however, all six themes are very diverse in their melodic and rhythmic structure, being (except for the first, which is a Händel's theme) relatively short (Fig. 8). The themes are interwoven into a dense polyphonic fabric, so it is quite difficult, even when reading the score, to determine exactly where one theme ends and another begins. This quality, as well as the migration of themes from one voice to another during an exposition, is reminiscent of Händel's fugal style, which, as is well known, was somewhat freer than Bach's. All six themes are displayed at the same time with small input delays. The entire fugue consists of seven approaches to the thematic complex in different tonalities: *C*-dur, *G*-dur, *a*-moll, *F*-dur, *B*-dur, *Es*-dur, followed by a code. This fugue is characterized by a very fluent polyphonic syntax, that is due both to the interweaving of the themes, as well as the lack of cadences and interludes, which imposes extraordinary fluency and unity to the discourse.

The image shows a facsimile of the first system of Fugue no. 15 by Reicha. The title is "Adagio. * A 6 Sujets et à 6 Parties." and the page number is 45. The music is written for six parts (three staves on top and three on the bottom). The first staff on the top system is labeled "Handel's theme". The music features complex rhythmic patterns and multiple voices. At the bottom of the system, there is a note: "* On a gravé cette fugue sur 5 portés en fin pour être en état de bien distinguer chaque partie d'avec les autres."

Fig. 8 Fugue no.15, Facsimile

In several fugues, Reicha establishes a connection to the old tradition by using themes borrowed from his predecessors: Haydn (no. 3, the subject is taken from the primary theme of the first movement in J. Haydn's *f*-moll *String quartet* no. 23, op. 20, no. 5), J. S. Bach (no. 5, the subject is taken from Bach's *G*-dur fugue from Book II of the *WTC*), W.A. Mozart (no. 7, the subject is taken from the beginning of Mozart's *Haffner* Symphony, K 385.), D. Scarlatti (no. 9, the subject is taken from Scarlatti's *Fuga del Gato*), G. Frescobaldi (no. 14, the subject is taken from the ricercar *Cromatico post il credo* from Frescobaldi's Second Mass of his *Fiori musicali*) and G. Fr. Händel (no. 15, the subject is taken from the first chorus *I will sing unto the Lord* of the second part of the oratorio *Israel in Egypt*). By this the author probably wished to continue the tradition of composition on foreign themes practiced frequently in the 17th -18th centuries, at the same time these fugues seem to be tributes to the masters of the past. Foreign thematism does not extinguish the author, he manages to adapt it to his own composition, to his individual style. In this very eloquent sense I find fugue no. 14 on Frescobaldi's theme, named by the author *Fuga-fantasia*, a title that contains the name of two different genres, based on two types of exposition, and I would even say diametrically opposed musical thinking – the fugue, with the traditional rigidity in construction and the fantasy of which has its own freedom and lack of default

patterns. The composition of this fugue is characterized by great freedom and an improvisational fantasy spirit. The fugue begins with a small introduction in which Frescobaldi's theme sounds in a majestic accordion bill. This type of syntax will return several times during the fugue and at the end of it, thus gaining the role of a quasi-refrain and printing the features of a concentric or round shape. After the introduction, according to the rules of the genre, the exposition should start, but as we will see along the way, it does not differ at all from the developing sections, because Reicha does not observe the principle of imitative exposition of the subject in all voices. Frescobaldi's theme, which sounds like a cantus firmus displayed for a long time, is presented concurrently with another contrasting theme in the vivid character of movable perpetuum with latent polyphony elements. This opposition between the quiet character of the first theme and the continuous movement of the second is maintained throughout the entire fugue and is emphasized by the two-voice texture. The structure of the fugue is more like an ostinato form than a fugue. Frescobaldi's theme always sounds the same regardless of the voice it appears at or the sound from which it resumes, while the second theme always changes, develops, appears each time in a different variant. Thus, the name *Fuga-fantasia* given by the author seems fully justified.

The architectonics of Reicha's fugues are also very varied. Most of them have quite elaborate compositions, often with a tripartite structure. From the traditional sections of the fugue only the exposition keeps the connection with the baroque to a more obvious extent, while the entertainment and the part are characterized by greater freedom, the changes often being so substantial that they can hardly be included in the traditional pattern of fugues. In these compartments, the polyphonic syntax frequently gives way to the place of homophonic expositions, the processes of counterpoint development being replaced with different types of sequences, with the variation of the thematic material and with motif elaboration. Mostly, the interludes are built on the development of elements extracted from the theme, so it becomes quite difficult to delimit them from the retakes of the theme itself, especially since they often do not sound complete but appear sectioned in several parts. The fragments of the subject sound at different voices and can be interrupted by some foreign melodic intercalations. Many fugues have a free enough texture and not all of them keep the same number of voices throughout.

Of course, among A. Reicha's *36 Fugues for piano* we find many traditional fugues in which the canons of the genre, enriched with the achievements of musical works from the borders of the 18th-19th centuries are respected. In his writings, the author shows a firm mastery of the most sophisticated counterpoint techniques, making masterful straits, canonical sequences and ingenious combinations of themes. At the same time, by adopting a freer and richer tonal and harmonic thinking, Reicha anticipates the

ways of developing this genre in many composers's works from the 19th -20th centuries.

In total, Reicha composed about 80 fugues for the most diverse components, some being included in cyclic works, others being stand-alone pieces. We agree with Czech musicologist J. Vysloužil's opinion, who states that "Reicha did not cause a revival of the baroque as the neoclassical composers did in the 20th century (Hindemith and Shostakovich). He wished, keeping the formal characteristics of the fugue, to give it higher aesthetic value" (Vysloužil, 1975, p. 35). French researcher A. Ramaut mentions that "the fugue, whose fiery defender Reicha was, becomes in combination with his treatises a symbol of his art, a paradoxical art, because it is at the same time rigorous and at the same time fanciful" (Ramaut, 2005, p. 77).

2.4. *L'art de varier [The art of variation]* - a true encyclopedia of variational processes

L'art de varier op. 57 is another impressive cycle that includes 57 variations written on a simple theme in *F*-dur, articulated in a rounded binary form, the first period of which is exposed at one voice. The dramaturgy of the cycle reflects the line of the gradual increase of the difficulty by exhausting the resources of the theme towards the end, but at the same time it is based on the principle of contrast, which is manifested between the adjacent variations. "Contrast is achieved not only by alternation of key (major and minor modes) and of harmony (diatonic and chromatic variations), but also by changes in the rhythm and tempo, along with the highly effective alternation of melodic with predominantly harmonic variations." (Racek, 1961, p. XI) Some variations (no. 4, 8, 14, 15, 22, 23, 31, 57) are in other tonalities than the main one (*f*-moll, *d*-moll, *Des*-dur) generating a varied and interesting tonal plan. The whole cycle is kept predominantly in homophonic writing, but in some variations we observe certain polyphonic incursions (imitations, polyphonization of the homophonic texture, etc.). Particularly there is variation no. 56, which is made in the form of a four-voice fugue (*fughetta*, in fact). The work has a concerted character and involves an elevated pianistic technique. The author chooses an important technological problem in each variation and intends to exhaust all possible resources of the variational technique. Although most of the variations are ornamental, some also carry genre specifications (no. 31 - *Funeral March*, no. 40 - *Menuetto*, no. 52 - *Gavotte*, no. 56 - *Fugue*, no. 57 - *Rondo*), thus combining two types of variations.

As Czech researcher Jan Racek points out, certain variations sound like reminiscences of predecessors (for example, var. no. 15 recalls some pages in Bach's famous *Ciaccona* for violin solo), others, on the contrary, anticipate the compositional style of future composers. Thus, variations no. 18, 22, 34

prefigure the writing of Schumann and Brahms with their polyphonic nature, no. 27 and 38 with the numerous “Tristanesque” delays – that of Wagner, no. 44 – Debussy’s compositional style. Some of the variations return the theme to a chordic variant very close to the original, playing the role of a quasi-refrain and suggesting certain associations with the *Promenade* in the Mussorgski’s *Pictures from an exhibition*. When analyzing Reicha’s *Art of variation*, certain analogies with a famous cycle appear, namely – the great J. S. Bach’s *Die Kunst der Fuge*, “which in the same way combines pedagogical aims with artistic conception” (Racek, 1961, p. XII). Without comparing the artistic value of the two cycles we can observe certain similarities in the tendency to combine in both cases certain pedagogical tasks with an imposing artistic conception.

In addition to this cycle of variations, Reicha wrote two more: one, op. 87, composed of 14 variations and a *Coda* on a theme from Gluck’s opera *Armida* and the second, also called *Piano Studies* op. 102, on a theme by Gretry, featuring the same number of 57 variations followed by a *Rondo* as the *Art of variation*.

2.5. Duets and trios for studying instruments

During his entire life, Reicha, himself a soloist, composed many pieces for different wind instruments and ensembles. The compositions for several identical instruments occupy a special place in the composer’s repertoire, as evidenced by the *Quartets for flute* op. 12 and op. 27 or *Variations for two flutes* op. 20. In addition to increased attention to wind instruments, The *Horns Trio* from op. 82 also illustrates Reicha’s interest in pedagogy, as well as his affinity with counterpoint. Composed at horn player Louis François Dauprat’s (1781-1868) command and published in Paris in 1815 by the Pleyel/Schlesinger publishing house, the collection includes four books of pieces - some very short, others more developed, written for three horns (there is also the variant of performance for two horns and a bassoon or cello) which, in our opinion, can be attributed to the category of didactic works, currently being used quite frequently in the horn repertoire. Here many genres and forms practiced in the musical art of classicism are represented: there are two canons, a double counterpoint to the octave, a fugue, a cycle of variations on the theme of the song *Charmante Gabrielle*, some dances such as the minuet and musette, a march, more character pieces and short technical exercises or musical jokes, such as *Trio no. 15*, entitled *Tritonus*, in which two of the three instruments play only three tones. In David Hurwitz’s opinion, the 24 trios “constitute one of the most curious productions of a composer specialized in musical curiosities” (Hurwitz).

Tritonus

Nr. 15 Allegretto

Fig. 9 Trio op. 82, no. 15 (Corni in F)

Duets for violin and cello op. 84 are also part of the same category of pieces. As mentioned on the page of the digital resource center on French romantic music BRU ZANE MEDIABASE, this association of instruments represents a rare formation, except for works from the Baroque era, when the bass voice was only allowed to be played on the cello, but which involves a continuo part played by several instruments. From here the originality of Reicha's duets, who also dedicated to this composition early works op. 1, op. 3, op. 4, whose paternity is not established precisely but "disputed" between Antonin Reicha and his uncle, Joseph, a well-known cellist and composer. The last collection of duets op. 84 no doubt belongs to A. Reicha, being published in 1814 at the Gambaro Publishing House in Paris. These duets present a practical illustration of the theoretical principles set out by the author in the *Petit Traité d'harmonie pratique à deux parties, suivi d'exemples en contrepoint double, et de douze duos pour violon et violoncelle, pouvant se jouer aussi sur le piano* (Little treatise on two-voice harmony followed by a few examples in double counterpoint and twelve duets for violin and cello that can also be played on the piano). The edition is prefaced by didactic observations on harmony on two voices, which include several musical examples including a small cycle of double counterpoint variations. In the 12 duets the cello plays about the same role as the violin, being often treated as a melodic voice, although in some pieces the author attributes it a special harmonic function (*basso ostinato* in no. 5 and 10). While Reicha exploits all the resources of the fugue in several of his compositions, here he cultivates a type of polymelodic writing that approaches a "conversational style", preferring the freedom of fantasy to the severity of imitative exposure explored

in many other works. Most duets contain two pieces: the first one can sometimes be unfolded, like the one in duet no. 7 where we find an *Andante* made as a theme with six variations. Two of the duets contain three sections: no. 9, which is composed of Introduction (*Andante*), an *Allegro non troppo* and a final *Allegro scherzando*, subtitled *Imitation of the wind harp*, and no. 10, starting with a *Basso ostinato*, followed by a *Menuet* and an *Allegro*.

2.6. Studies in the fugal genre - a polyphonic cycle for didactic purposes

The *34 Studies in the fugal genre for piano* op. 97 [*Études dans le genre fugue pour le pianoforte*] were composed in Paris during the years 1815-1817 and were first published in 1820. This cycle, according to A. Ramaut, “is a practical contribution to the scholarly contribution that *Cours de composition musicale*, published in 1818, represents” (Ramaut, 2005, p. 77). In this cycle, unlike the op. 30 studies, the technique is no longer solfegistic, but rather compositional. The title of this collection is a bit misleading because each study is composed of two pieces – a prelude (which is not fugue) dedicated to a certain technique or compositional problem and a fugue or a fugal piece (which is not a study). The two pieces are usually written in the same tone or in the homonym mode (dur-moll). The prelude pieces from the 34 studies are marked by greater freedom and favor inspiration, while the fugues always remain a tribute to rigorous and well-organized thinking. Here is what Reicha writes in his autobiographical notes: “As I was at the same time a practitioner and a theoretician, that is to say I was composing and dealing with the theory of my art, I always payed attention to the great difference between feeling and spirit and to the specific way that each person combines the respective operations. As a creative artist I consistently exercised feelings and imagination, which was sometimes too ardent, too alive and too active for me. We especially loved and admired people who cultivated at the same time the two great qualities of the soul: feelings and spirit, and it always seemed to me that those who possess only one of these qualities are only half people” (quoted by: Ramaut, 2005, p. 84).

The cycle is preceded by Reicha’s instructive comments addressed to young composers who choose to study music in which the author offers practical tips and clues for composing pieces in the fugal genre. Here is what he writes in the preface: “This genre – the fugue, is and always will be the one that true connoisseurs and music lovers will respect the most, not only because it is the most difficult, but because it is not subject to the whims of frivolous and ephemeral taste” (Reicha, ca. 1825, p. 1). In the preludes to this cycle we find the use of a large number of different musical forms and genres. For example, *Aria* in no. 4 and no. 12, *Sarabanda* in no. 5 and no. 9, *Menuetto* in no. 13, *Rondo* in no. 17, variations, including on *basso ostinato* (no. 8) and on the famous harmonic progression *La Folia* (no. 33), *canon* in no. 11. Many of

the pieces excel through the extensive application of the double counterpoint (for example prelude no. 3 is a theme with variations, in which variations 1, 3, 5 and 7 represent the initial compound, while variations 2, 4, 6 and 8 are derived combinations made in a rigorous canonical technique).



Fig. 10 *Studies in the fugue genre, Prelude no. 3*

Through this cycle, as A. Ramaut rightly mentions, Reicha left to posterity “more than a method of instrumental technique”, more than “simple “mechanics of the fingers” but rather a treatise of style, taste, a genre and finally a collection in which musical, mathematical or philosophical problems combine with cultivating the taste for analysis, for understanding the mechanisms underlying a musical discourse” (Ramaut, 2005, p. 85).

Considering the imposing number of works named by Reicha *Studies*, he can rightly be considered one of the proponents of this genre in French music. But in Reicha’s case, it is not about studies that aim only to cultivate virtuosity itself, but rather complex exercises that involve both the “technological” processes of interpretation and the “spiritual” ones. We cannot disagree with the same A. Ramaut, who believes that in Reicha’s vision the meaning of the word “study” is closest to the first meaning offered by a French dictionary, where he writes that “study is an application of the spirit to learn or to deepen the sciences, letters or arts” (Ramaut, 2005, p. 86).

3. Conclusions

In his theoretical writings, Reicha repeatedly emphasizes that theory must be justified by practice and that students must know the principles of contemporary composition and not just the old rules that are often diametrically opposed to what students hear outside the classroom; these “old principles” have led many students to mistakenly believe that serious study of composition is useless, because free music would allow anything. In this context it is worth noting that Reicha composed the musical examples for all his theoretical treatises, as opposed to other authors’ didactic works (especially counterpoint and fugue), in which examples were drawn from previous textbooks. The musical examples in Reicha’s treatises are not limited to small fragments meant to illustrate one rule or another. Alongside these examples, however, we find musical pieces of sometimes very imposing dimensions for various interpretative components (in particular, the examples inserted in volumes VIII, IX and X of the *Cours de Composition Musicale*¹), which practically demonstrate those principles that the author relates in his theoretical writings. The analysis of Reicha’s teaching cycles while studying his treatises allows us to create a more complex and truthful picture of the state of affairs in the field of professional music education in France in the first half of the 19th century.

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¹ Reicha, A. *Cours de composition musicale ou Traite complet d'harmonie pratique, de melodie, de haute composition musicale, de l'emploi des voix et des instruments, de contrepoints, canones et fugue etc.* Wien: bei Diabelli und Comp, Graben № 1133.

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