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The Tambourine, Joseph Dale's *Grand Sonata* and Its Role in the Appearance of Women Musicians in the Salon

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By the turn of the nineteenth century composers such as Daniel Steibelt and Muzio Clementi were writing keyboard pieces with tambourine (and, occasionally, triangle) parts that were clearly intended for private salon performances by girls and young women. These works were introduced to public and private European salons during the early nineteenth century. Steibelt performed such pieces, typically waltzes, bacchanals, rondos and divertissements whilst on tour with his English wife Catherine, daughter of the London-based music publisher and patent tambourine manufacturer Joseph Dale. She became a renowned tambourine virtuoso, even attracting the attention of the Bohemian musician and writer Václav Jan Tomášek, who described the great sensation caused by Catherine's performances.

I analyse different types of works that were written for the tambourine around the year 1800. Examples of short waltzes (which were usually published in sets of 6 or 12) are plentiful – they were by far the most common pieces written for piano and tambourine – and in them the historical link between the tambourine and dance is most obvious. I argue that these waltzes may have served as a bridging point between dance-like, energetic, social activities and passive, recreational drawing-room music. Further support for this idea can be found in a Grand Sonata for pianoforte, tambourine, flute, violin and basso by Joseph Dale. The tambourine part contains numerous choreographic instructions as well as a wide variety of playing techniques such as thumb rolls, bass notes and harmonics, the likes of which did not become common practice in the orchestral or chamber repertory until the twentieth century. Dale's intention was clearly to provide an opportunity for women musicians to express themselves in ways that were contrary to contemporary expectations of female social etiquette.

The turn of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of new genres of salon music, together with new types of both salon musicians and audience members. Attention has been given recently to such areas as the role of women composers and performers in the elevation of the Lied as a musical genre; salon performance practices; the contribution of women musicians to piano music in the salon context; and the intersections between salon music and literature.¹ The importance of music for the education of young girls in the late eighteenth century is also well-

¹ See, for example, Aisling Kenny and Susan Wollenberg, eds., *Women and the Nineteenth-Century Lied* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Jennifer Ronyak, *Intimacy, Performance, and the Lied in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018); R. Larry Todd, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and

documented. The British writer Elizabeth Lachlan (née Appleton) (1790–1849) remarked on the importance of music to a girl's education and upbringing: 'I know not of any gentleman's or nobleman's daughter who has not attempted, at one period in her life, to learn music. So general a pursuit requires, and so elegant an accomplishment demands, our particular attention'.² Less discussed, but of demonstrable significance, has been the appearance of the tambourine in the late eighteenth century and the extent to which it created a platform for women to contribute to domestic and salon music in more elaborate, virtuosic ways than had been customary. In this article I consider extant tambourine instruction manuals and compositions dating from the turn of the nineteenth century, that reveal a variety of techniques reflecting 'feminine' qualities such as gracefulness and elegance, while also hinting at virtuosity and individualism. Through this discussion I demonstrate the ways in which the short-lived fashion for the tambourine in the British salon reflects a shift in attitudes towards social customs. In particular, it allowed women the opportunity to move away from the conventional idea that their music making should confine itself to 'stationary' instruments such as the piano or harp. The tambourine, albeit modestly, offered women greater creative opportunities in the early nineteenth-century salon in the period before such opportunities were surpassed by the arrival of new, revolutionary genres, most notably the Schubertian Lied.

The tambourine had held an association with women and dancing since Biblical times: as James Blades observed, it is one of the few percussion instruments to have remained relatively unchanged over a long period of time.³ This association can be seen in a variety of contexts. The book of Exodus describes how 'Miriam the Prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing', while in ancient Egypt female temple dancers would beat tambourines during religious ceremonies, including funeral processions.⁴ In the wake of this historically close relationship with dance, eighteenth-century artists frequently represented the tambourine as a feminine instrument, perhaps as a reflection of the graceful elegance that was expected of gentrified girls at this time. Richard Leppert noted that the feminine representations of the tambourine in the eighteenth century stand in stark contrast to paintings of boys and drums, in which the expectation that boys should serve their king and country, putting the collective good ahead of their own safety or gain, is implied.⁵ Philippe

Phyllis Weliver, *Mary Gladstone and the Victorian Salon: Music, Literature, Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

² Elizabeth Appleton, *Private Education or A Practical Plan for the Studies of Young Ladies, with an Address to Parents, Private Governesses and Young Ladies* (London: Henry Colburn, 1816): 189.

³ James Blades, *Percussion Instruments and their History* (London: Faber & Faber, 1970): 385.

⁴ Exodus 15: 20 (NIV). Jeremy Montagu observes that for all references to the timbrel in the Old Testament the Hebrew word is the *tōf*, signifying a frame drum similar to the tambourine but without the jingles. See Jeremy Montagu, *Musical Instruments of the Bible* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2002): 18, and David P. Silverman, *Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 103. The painting *Miriam's Song of Thanksgiving* by Wilhelm Hensel (1794–1861), gifted to Queen Victoria in 1843, provides a fine example of the historical relationship between women and the tambourine. Hensel modelled the figure of Miriam on his wife, the composer Fanny Hensel (1805–1847), who famously maintained her own concert series in her home in Berlin.

⁵ Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 153.



Fig. 1 Philippe Mercier (c. 1689–1760), *A Young Drummer Boy*, early eighteenth century (© L.R. Nightingale: Norwich, Norfolk)

Mercier's undated portrait of *A Young Drummer Boy* (Fig. 1) shows the boy's intention to carry out his duty even if he is too young or too small to fight, while the stance, his gaze, his three-cornered hat and neat attire, and his adept holding of the sticks, all suggest that he is in command. Jean-Étienne Liotard's painting *Femme au tambourin vêtue à la turque* (c. 1738–1743) provides an intriguing example of the feminine association with the tambourine in the same period (Fig. 2): here the pale complexion of the woman forms a striking counterpoint to the rich, exotic costume and the tambourine.⁶ The instrument was also, on occasion, represented by artists as a gimmick or toy used by young girls: a 1792 print by Francesco Bartolozzi (1727–1815) of the three youngest daughters of King George III shows Princess Mary holding a small, colourful toy tambourine above her head.⁷

By the final decade of the eighteenth century the tambourine ceased to be used solely as a way of reflecting female gracefulness in art and became a popular instrument for young girls to learn, as indicated by the existence of at least three

⁶ Artists also used the tambourine to emphasize gender roles in British family life, a notable example being Samuel Woodforde's painting of *The Bennett Family* (1803). For further discussion of this practice, see Sam Girling, 'Clementi and the Tambourine: The Waltzes Opp. 38–39 in the Context of Domestic Music-Making in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', in Muzio Clementi and *British Musical Culture: Sources, Performance Practice and Style*, ed. Luca Lévi Sala and Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald (New York: Routledge, 2018): 164–5.

⁷ This painting is now held in the British Museum, London, shelf mark AN164944001.



Fig. 2 Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–1789), *Femme au tambourin vêtue à la turque*, c. 1738–1743 (© Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, 1938–0008)

tambourine instruction manuals sold by London-based music publishers from their shops: those of Joseph Dale, Thomas Bolton and Thomas Preston.⁸ All three manuals describe a variety of different shakes, rolls, jingles and turns (of the instrument and of the body) that an accomplished tambourine player could have included in performances. As well as the publication of instruction manuals, the popularity of the instrument can be seen through Dale's manufacturing of patent tambourines that were made with 'a new method of straining or tightening the skin ... so as effectually to remove certain objections and impediments felt by the performer'.⁹ The extent of the tambourine's popularity at the turn of the nineteenth century can be further demonstrated by the fact that Muzio Clementi, a well-established composer and teacher in London, chose to use an

⁸ See Girling, 'Clementi and the Tambourine', 167.

⁹ Tony Bingham, *Patents for Inventions: Abridgements of Specifications Relating to Music and Musical Instruments A.D. 1694–1866* (London: Bingham, 1984): 33. For further discussion of Dale's patent tambourine see Girling, 'Clementi and the Tambourine', 169–70.

edition of his Waltzes Op. 39 for piano, tambourine and triangle to launch his publishing career. Evidently, he took advantage of the brief fashion for the tambourine to ensure the quick commercial success of his early publications.¹⁰

The most celebrated composer of piano pieces with parts for tambourine was Daniel Steibelt (1765–1823). Born in Berlin, Steibelt established himself as a popular piano virtuoso in Paris during the 1790s, where he produced his most successful work, the opera *Roméo et Juliette* (first performed at the Théâtre Feydeau on 10 September 1793). By 1797 Steibelt was a regular performer in London's salons and concert halls, giving a performance of his new Third Piano Concerto, to great acclaim, at a Salomon concert on 19 March 1798.¹¹ This is quite a testament to the man who is remembered today, if at all, for his humiliation at the hands of Beethoven in a piano contest arranged by Count Moritz von Fries in Vienna in 1800. During his residence in London, Steibelt married Catherine Dale (1778–1825), daughter of the composer, publisher and patent tambourine manufacturer Joseph Dale. According to Arthur Loesser, 'she was quite an able manipulator of the tambourine, and joint performances with her husband were much enjoyed by a generation of new-formed music customers'.¹² The couple caused a great sensation when they included works for tambourine and piano in their salon performances whilst touring Europe together; in Prague this can be seen to have resulted in an interest in learning the tambourine there. The memoirs of the Bohemian musician and writer Václav Jan Tomášek record the phenomenon:

The desire to be able to handle the instrument ... was lively in all the ladies, and so it happened, that Steibelt's girlfriend was happy to be available to provide instruction therein. The instruction was over in twelve hours, for which the teacher was paid with twelve gold ducats; she received the same price for a tambourine, which meant that Steibelt spent several weeks in Prague, and gradually sold a huge wagon full of tambourines.¹³

¹⁰ For a more detailed overview of the significance of Clementi's Waltzes Opp. 38–39 for Clementi's publishing career see Girling, 'Clementi and the Tambourine', 170–74.

¹¹ Frank Dawes, 'Steibelt, Daniel' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001): vol. 8, 326–8. The concerto included the use of a tremolo in the Rondo to imitate a storm. Steibelt is credited with the invention of the keyboard tremolo: Stewart Gordon suggests that the tremolos in bars 31, 32, 35 and 36 of the third movement of Beethoven's Sonata no. 12 in A-flat major, Op. 26 (1802), are likely to have been influenced by Steibelt. See Stewart Gordon, *Beethoven Piano Sonatas*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Alfred Music, 2005): 89.

¹² Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955): 172. It is unclear what Loesser means by 'new-formed music customers': possibly this is a general reference to the growing accessibility of music to the middle class, or perhaps it is indicative of the level of surprise that contemporary audiences expressed when seeing a tambourine being used in the salon.

¹³ Stephen Thomson Moore, trans., *Wenzel Johann Tomaschek (1774–1850): Autobiography: Studies in Czech Music no. 4* (Hillsdale: Pendragon, 2017): 22. Tomášek insists on referring to Catherine Steibelt as 'girlfriend' rather than 'wife', while he opts to use the phrase 'manipulate' rather than 'play' the tambourine. Tomášek possibly sought thereby to undermine or belittle Steibelt's personal and professional reputation. The description of the Steibelts' performances and the 'huge wagon full of tambourines' creates the impression that, to a certain extent, their short waltzes for tambourine and piano were written and played primarily for their entertainment value.

The tambourines that they sold would almost certainly have been those manufactured by Catherine's father, thus providing a lucrative opportunity for Dale to establish marketing links with European music merchants and publishers, in a similar way to Clementi's relationship with Breitkopf and Härtel in Leipzig, or Pleyel's association with Dussek in Paris. A fee of 12 gold ducats was a considerable amount to charge for music lessons in central Europe at this time. Clementi, one of London's most sought-after piano teachers, reputedly raised his fees to one guinea per hour from 1784 onwards; this was roughly half the amount that Catherine Steibelt charged for a tambourine lesson in Prague. If people were willing to pay such a large amount for lessons, there was evidently status and enjoyment to be had in mastering the instrument.¹⁴ It is likely that the piano and tambourine duets would have been included in Steibelt's salon performances as short encores or interludes, alongside more substantial works such as the *Storm* rondo (an adaptation of his Third Piano Concerto finale) or programmatic battle pieces such as *La Grande Marche de Buonaparte en Italie*.¹⁵ Although Steibelt's works continued to be published well after his death, late nineteenth-century music critics, among them Oskar Bie and Eugène Rapin, viewed him with considerable animosity and moral condemnation, describing him *inter alia* as a disgraceful charlatan and the 'main parasite of his age'.¹⁶ Bie observed:

This Steibelt was one of the disgraces of the age. Bespattered with praise, he rushed through Europe with his trashy compositions, his battles, thunder-storms, bacchanals, which he played ad libitum, while his wife struck the tambourine in concert with him. The populace was enraptured, for Steibelt and Madame tickled their nerves with sparkling shakes and tremolos.¹⁷

Such perceptions, which may have a kernel of truth, informed the received view of Steibelt.

Despite his piano sonatas and battle pieces, which typically showcased innovations in tremolo and pedal technique, it appears to be the works for piano and tambourine that most strongly captured the imagination of European audiences. This is apparent from Tomášek's writings:

¹⁴ Leon Plantinga, *Clementi: His Life and Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977): 152–3. Plantinga cites evidence from *The Quarterly Music Magazine* and the journals of Mrs Papendiek, lady-in-waiting to Queen Charlotte of Great Britain and Ireland.

¹⁵ The title page of an edition of Steibelt's *La grande Marche de Buonaparte en Italie* (c. 1798) housed in the British Library (hereafter GB-LBl), shelf mark h.1480, p.(18), mentions an ad lib. part for a tambourine.

¹⁶ See Oskar Bie, *A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Player*, trans. E. E. Kellett and F. W. Naylor (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1899): 162–3 and Eugène Rapin, *Histoire du piano et des pianistes* (Lausanne: Georges Bridel, 1904): 106. In tandem with later nineteenth-century trends whereby great works of art were viewed in almost religious terms, the hierarchy of genres implicated in the development of the canon meant that works in smaller-scale genres, and regarded conventionally as entertaining or unpretentious, could be systematically undervalued. The critical stance shown in the writings of Bie and Rapin reflects the values of their own time; modern ideas about the canon, together with a greater emphasis on social context, encourage a less judgemental approach to the study of popular culture.

¹⁷ Bie, *A History of the Pianoforte*, 162–3.

Although Steibelt's artistic achievement did not please the Prague nobility, he yet knew how to make his reckoning with them in a different way. He had, in fact, an English woman with him, whom he introduced as his wife, and who played the tambourine, accompanying him at the pianoforte, for whom he wrote several small rondos. The new combination of such heterogeneous instruments so electrified the highborn, that they could hardly get enough of being seen on the beautiful arm of the English woman.¹⁸

The 'little rondos' described by Tomášek probably refer to the many short waltzes, divertissements and bacchanals that Steibelt wrote for piano with accompaniments for tambourine. These pieces are simple in nature, typically in major keys and, in the case of the waltzes, in da capo form. There are a few exceptions to this, however, in which the composer includes hints of exoticism. For instance, some editions of his *Turkish Rondo* for piano, Op. 38, contain an additional part for the tambourine.¹⁹ In similar fashion to Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca* from the Piano Sonata in A major, K331, this work uses many of the so-called 'Turkish' musical devices popularized by composers in the 1790s, most notably the duple metre, static harmony and alternating major and minor passages.²⁰ The tambourine part is not included in several earlier editions of this piece; possibly its use represents an afterthought on the part of the composer, in response to the popularity (and therefore marketing potential) of the instrument that developed during the late eighteenth century. Orchestral and operatic works written in the so-called *alla Turca* style typically feature bass drum, cymbals and triangle (with no tambourine) to represent the Turkish percussion section.²¹ However, it is possible that Steibelt originally intended this work to be performed on a piano with a Janissary stop, a mechanism he may well have been familiar with given the fact that he spent time in Vienna in 1800.²² Here the tambourine part may have functioned as a substitute for the Janissary stop (which is unlikely to have been available in many domestic households and, in any case, was exceedingly rare in Britain at this time) in order to make the work more accessible to the public. Given the tambourine's historic association with women, and the popularity of the instrument amongst young girls in late eighteenth-century Britain, the reason behind its use in this instance to represent the *alla Turca* style, which Mary Hunter claims is associated with

¹⁸ Moore, trans., *Wenzel Johann Tomaschek*, 22.

¹⁹ Shelf mark GB-LBL, g.457.(2.).

²⁰ For further discussion of these 'Turkish' signifiers and the *alla Turca* style in general see Mary Hunter, 'The *Alla Turca* Style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and Seraglio', in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998): 43–73; and Matthew Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart's Turkish Music* (London: Royal Musical Association, 2000).

²¹ Harrison Powley observes that the tambourine is not mentioned in first-hand descriptions of eighteenth-century Janissary music, though it was used by Western composers to create 'Turkish' effects. See Harrison Powley, in *Encyclopedia of Percussion*, ed. John Beck (New York: Garland, 1995): 198.

²² The 'Janissary stop', a pedal mechanism that imitated the sound of the bass drum, cymbals and bells, enjoyed notable popularity during the Biedermeier period in Vienna (1815–1848), with Matthias Müller and Franz Dorn among innovative manufacturers of the stop. It allowed noisy Turkish percussion effects to be recreated with ease in private homes and salons.

Ex. 1 Daniel Steibelt, *Turkish Rondo*, Op. 38, bars 7–13 (London: R. Birchall, c1800)

'extreme masculinity', is rather arcane.²³ It is also significant that few orchestral or operatic pieces that make use of a 'Turkish' percussion section include a part for tambourine. For the purposes of salon music, the tambourine would have been played by girls in a graceful, elegant manner (as outlined in the various instruction manuals) that bore little resemblance to the overly rhythmic and heavily accented parts found in Steibelt's *Turkish Rondo* (Ex. 1). These connotations may in part explain why the waltz was by far the most common musical form for which tambourine parts were written.

Throughout the A sections of waltzes written for this combination of instruments, the tambourine would typically reinforce the rhythmic substrata of the right-hand piano part, and thus offer primarily an accompaniment that used techniques (as discussed by Thomas Preston) known as flamps and semi flamps (see Ex. 2).²⁴ The piano part would generally change character in the B section, replicated by the tambourine playing longer held notes using techniques termed gingle notes or bass notes – these would be achieved by moving the thumb or index finger across the skin of the instrument in order to create a continuous jingle sound.²⁵ Dale's Waltz Op. 16 No. 13, 'Vivace alla Scozzese', demonstrates an overwhelming use of bass notes in the tambourine part (Ex. 3), perhaps to resemble Scottish military drumming (also displayed in the prominence of the Lombard rhythm in the piano part).²⁶

Whilst flamps, semi flamps, gingle notes and bass notes were the most common techniques found in such waltzes, other more elaborate techniques such as the double travale were also used. This was essentially a short flourish which involved a quick turn of the wrist to be correctly executed. Thomas Bolton's instruction manual indicates that the second note is produced with the fingers forming a cluster, and the third is described as an up-hand, thus creating three distinct sounds. He warns that 'in the performance of the foregoing characters it is necessary to observe that much depends on the pliantness of the wrist'.²⁷ An example of the double travale can be found in the music of Joseph Mazzinghi (1765–1844),

²³ Hunter, 'The *Alla Turca* Style', 57. Hunter notes that the *alla Turca* style in eighteenth-century opera is associated with 'bravado, fierceness, an obsessive interest in domination'.

²⁴ Flamps were performed by 'striking the instrument with the fingers or fingernails' and semi flamps were performed by hitting the instrument 'with the knuckle of any finger'. See Thomas Preston, *Instructions for the Tambourine* (London: Preston, 1813).

²⁵ See Girling, 'Clementi and the Tambourine', 167–9 for further discussion of these techniques.

²⁶ Shelf mark GB-LBI, g.231.(3.). Dale's collection of short waltzes for the tambourine is found in volumes of music alongside rondos, adaptations of popular tunes, Irish jigs, scherzos, and characteristic sonatas such as *The Alarm*, which includes representations of bugle calls, the firing of muskets, a call to arms and a cavalry march.

²⁷ Thomas Bolton, *Instructions for the Tambourine* (London: Bolton, 1799): 51.

Ex. 2 Flamps (marked 'a') and semi flamps (marked 'b') in Steibelt's Bacchanal No. 1 (Paris: Chez Melles Erard, c. 1800)

Ex. 3 Dale's Waltz Op. 16 No. 13 in *Eight Waltzes for the Pianoforte or Harp with an Accompaniment for Flute, Tambourine and Triangle* (London: Dale, 1800)

Ex. 4 Double travale (a) and gingle notes (b) in Joseph Mazzinghi's 'Air No. 4' from *Twelve Airs for the Pianoforte with Accompaniments for Flute and Tambourine* (London: Goulding, Phipps and D'Almaine)

composer of several comic operas performed in Covent Garden at the turn of the nineteenth century (Ex. 4).²⁸

Although Steibelt's encores clearly caused a stir in many of Prague's salons, printed publications of such works were primarily intended for the British domestic market; surviving collections of music manuscripts in aristocratic properties such as Tatton Park and Oulton Park, Cheshire, illustrate this trend.²⁹ The reasons for the popularity of these waltzes amongst girls and, indeed, their more general social acceptance, can perhaps be traced to the calls for a shift in gender values from such pioneering writers as Mary Wollstonecraft, Catharine Macaulay and Mary Hays, whose work came to prominence in the aftermath of the French

²⁸ Shelf mark GB-LBI, g.443.mm.(11.).

²⁹ For a study of the musical collections at Tatton Park in the late eighteenth century see Katrina Faulds, "'Invitation pour la danse': Social Dance, Dance Music and Feminine Identity in the English Country House c1770–1830' (PhD dissertation, University of Southampton, 2015).

Revolution. In her *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Wollstonecraft brought issues such as the social class system and perceptions of female identity into question, heavily criticizing Edmund Burke for his pessimistic, regressive view of the French Revolution: she accused him of reverencing the 'rust of antiquity'. Wollstonecraft pushed women's rights to the forefront of British politics for the first time.³⁰ She fundamentally believed that events in France could act as a catalyst for social reform, removing outdated attitudes. George Taylor has noted that her ideas were beginning to take hold: the historical events of the 1790s allowed gender roles to become politicized, so that qualities such as 'directness and simplicity' became more desirable and acceptable characteristics of women than they had been a decade earlier.³¹

In several respects, the appearance of the tambourine in the home and in private salons reflected the changing values that proponents of women's rights were advocating. Many of the 34 techniques listed in Dale's instruction manual are sufficiently passive to portray the graceful young girl as a desirable character, yet are still able to create enough expressive interest to offer perceptible contrast with other domestic musical practices. Dale is careful to advise performers as to the ways to play the instrument without creating a notably flamboyant spectacle: 'if [it is] held properly you will be able to move [the tambourine] up or down and from side to side, or in any manner required without being obliged to grasp it.'³² He goes on to declare that 'the necessary practice' of playing the instrument 'at first must simply be up and down, with the wrist out, and the elbow even with the hand, the arm to be kept as still as possible and the tambourine turned a little from you'.³³ Unlike the repertoire for other instruments of the period that were deemed unsuitable for girls to play, particularly the violin, tambourine parts written by Steibelt, Clementi and Dale, amongst others, provided a middle ground between virtuosity and the concept of gracefulness seen as a necessary quality of upper- and middle-class girls in the second half of the eighteenth century.³⁴

In his 1757 essay *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Edmund Burke described gracefulness as 'an idea belonging to posture and motion' and explained that achieving it required the avoidance of appearing 'divided by sharp and sudden angles'.³⁵ Eric McKee takes the case of Mozart's ballroom trios, written for the festivities at the Redoutensaal, Vienna, between 1788

³⁰ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (London: J. Johnson, 1790): 3. See also Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (London: J. Johnson, 1792) and Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Dodsley, 1790).

³¹ George Taylor, *The French Revolution and the London Stage, 1789–1805* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 100.

³² Joseph Dale, *Instructions for the Tambourine* (London: Dale, 1800): 4.

³³ Dale, *Instructions for the Tambourine*, 4.

³⁴ For a detailed discussion of female violinists in the late eighteenth century see Hester Bell Jordan, 'Transgressive Gestures: Women and Violin Performance in Eighteenth-Century Europe' (MMus dissertation, New Zealand School of Music, 2016): 16–19. Susan Burney remarked that woodwind and brass instruments 'were considered even less appropriate for women than the violin', because playing them resulted in the contortion of the face. See Philip Olleson, ed., *The Journals and Letters of Susan Burney* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012): 226–7.

³⁵ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 5th edition (London: J. Dodsley, 1757): 107.

and 1791, as exemplifying the various attributes of grace: 'simplicity (tempered with variety)', 'composure of the body', 'roundness of motion', 'weightlessness', 'restraint', and 'hidden control'.³⁶ These attributes can also be found in abundance in tambourine works of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The tambourine's appearance in the private salon not only satisfied the ideals of stillness, composure and passivity that were expected whenever women played musical instruments (this can also be seen in artistic representations such as Fig. 2), but additionally offered greater variety, giving the performer a sense of individualism. It was perhaps that new-found individualism that the Prague audiences regarded as the most intriguing aspect of Catherine Steibelt's tambourine playing.

The simple rhythmic structure characteristic of the tambourine parts, coupled with the wide range of techniques (for instance, the rapid alternations between flamps and semi flamps seen in Steibelt's Bacchanal No. 1) created an opportunity for girls to find a suitable balance between virtuosity and discipline. Bolton's request for the turn to be effected 'with the most careless elegance and ease', and the lightweight nature of Dale's patent instrument, indicate a sense of conforming to Burke's concept of passive gracefulness; yet certain elements of the musical notation and instruction manuals hint at the performer's less restrictive role – one that instead emphasizes movement and even extravagance.³⁷ Following a detailed study of the musical collections of the Egerton family at Tatton Park, Katrina Faulds proposes that the theatrical nature of the tambourine, as seen in extant iconography, instruction manuals and these short waltzes, allowed for a new choreography to be centred on the tambourine player, giving women an opportunity to express themselves in ways contrary to contemporary literature on social conduct.³⁸ Nowhere are these ideas better demonstrated than in Joseph Dale's *Grand Sonata* Op. 18, written for piano and tambourine with accompanying parts for flute, violin and basso.

Dale's *Grand Sonata* is highly significant in the context of this study as it displays the new tambourine choreography more fully than any other extant work from the period; furthermore, it suggests a more serious musical role for the tambourine than that seen in Steibelt's short waltzes. Its most notable choreographic feature was known as a turn. Dale's instruction manual describes numerous types of turn, including 'turning the tambourine round upon the thumb to the right (or left) as many times as you can', or holding 'the tambourine above your head horizontally with its [the instrument's] head downwards and turning it round, taking care to stop in the same position'.³⁹ Dale implies that there were as many as 11 turns with which a tambourine player might be familiar (Fig. 3). The range of techniques and movements shown here gives us some idea of how Catherine Steibelt played the instrument in the Prague salons and elsewhere.

The title page of this work reveals that the tambourine parts were in fact written by Dale's son, Joseph Dale Junior; it was dedicated to the Duchess of Dorset,

³⁶ Taken from Table 2.2 in Eric J. McKee, *Decorum of the Minuet, Delirium of the Waltz* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007): 62–3. McKee goes on to observe that Mozart's sense of 'rhythmic ease ... , the result of compositional techniques that provide continuity, transparency, and a sense of musical lightness', helps to reflect many of the graceful attributes that philosophers such as Edmund Burke and William Hogarth were advocating.

³⁷ Bolton, *Instructions for the Tambourine*, 50.

³⁸ Faulds, "'Invitation pour la danse'", 210.

³⁹ Dale, *Instructions for the Tambourine*, 3–5.



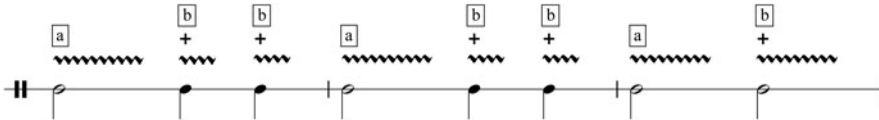
Fig. 3 Different types of turn in Dale's *Instructions for the Tambourine* (London: Dale, 1799)

presumably Arabella Diana Cope (1769–1825).⁴⁰ The piece itself was most probably intended for private salon performances in aristocratic residences; only the piano and tambourine have an obligato role. Presumably the flute, violin and basso parts could be included according to availability of personnel, and were almost certainly written with the male household members in mind.⁴¹ The work is structured in three movements: an allegro, a siciliana and a rondo.

The opening of the first movement has the tambourine function as a concertante instrument, with the piano, flute, violin and basso playing a 30-bar introduction prior to the entry of the tambourine, which plays almost continuously thereafter. Staccato beats, double traveses and short bass notes dominate the early stages of the movement. In bars 64–66 we see an alternating sequence of gingle notes that are to be played by the index finger and thumb respectively (Ex. 5). The expectation here was that on beats one and two the performer would move her index finger around the edge of the tambourine in an anti-clockwise direction, pressing in order to make it jingle, and then returning the opposite way with the thumb on beats three and four. The ending of each phrase is marked with a turn, usually

⁴⁰ Shelf mark GB-LBI, h.270.(9.). It is common to find dedications to aristocratic ladies on the front page of tambourine parts in the late eighteenth century.

⁴¹ Simon McVeigh notes that the violin and flute were considered 'masculine' instruments at this time. That women should play such instruments was considered radical and inappropriate, as was the case with the flautist Marianne Davies and the violinists Maddalena Lombardini Sirmen and Louisa Gautherot in London. See Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 86–7.



Ex. 5 Gingles with the index finger (a) followed by the thumb (b) in Dale's *Grand Sonata*, first movement, bars 64–66

to the right of the body (marked as No. 23 in Dale's instructions – see Fig. 3). Here, Dale specifies that the performer is to 'turn the tambourine round upon the thumb to the right as many times as you can and as the time will admit'.⁴² This technique, one that unsurprisingly never found its way into orchestral music, again highlights the theatrical and visual nature of these works. Techniques such as this would most likely have had greatest impact if executed while holding the tambourine high in the air. Extant iconography seems to support this: the title pages of many volumes with tambourine parts show a female tambourine player holding the instrument above head height (see Fig. 4).

In the second movement, a siciliana, it is clear that choreography is the main dramatic agent of the tambourine part, rather than any specific instrumental technique or sound. Here the composer specifies that the turn of the tambourine should occur only once (see Fig. 3, No. 27), or not at all, or that the instrument should be held horizontally above the head and turned once, stopping in the same position. Considering the typically slow speed of a siciliana, the performer would have required a strong sense of rhythm and pulse to ensure that the choreography matched the speed of the other instruments. Later in the movement the player is expected to perform a round bass (a technique that Dale suggests needs to be taught by a master in order to be fully understood). Again highly visual in nature, this involved the performer turning the tambourine towards herself, passing it under the arm, whilst continuing to play a bass note.

In similar vein to that of the first movement, the tambourine part of the rondo finale largely consists of flamps (also known as beats) and bass notes, with occasional round basses and right- or left-hand turns. The final passage of the movement contains symbols above certain notes that indicate which part of the finger the performer was expected to use (Ex. 6).

Dale specifies that the following technique should be adhered to when playing this passage (Ex. 7):

The beat at no. 9 is done by striking downwards with the nails of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd fingers together. That at no. 10 by the tops of the same fingers on the left side of the tambourine. That at no. 11 by the back fingers on the right side, and that at no. 12 with the ends of the fingers on the inside of the tambourine.⁴³

Clearly, in addition to the choreographic turns, the performer was expected to possess considerable dexterity in order to be able to play this work effectively. Furthermore, the part would need to be memorized because the choreography would make reading the music from the score or part impractical. The elaborate techniques and choreographic turns outlined in the instruction manuals and replicated in Dale's *Grand Sonata* hardly display the attributes of female gracefulness

⁴² Dale, *Instructions for the Tambourine*, 5.

⁴³ Dale, *Instructions for the Tambourine*, 4.

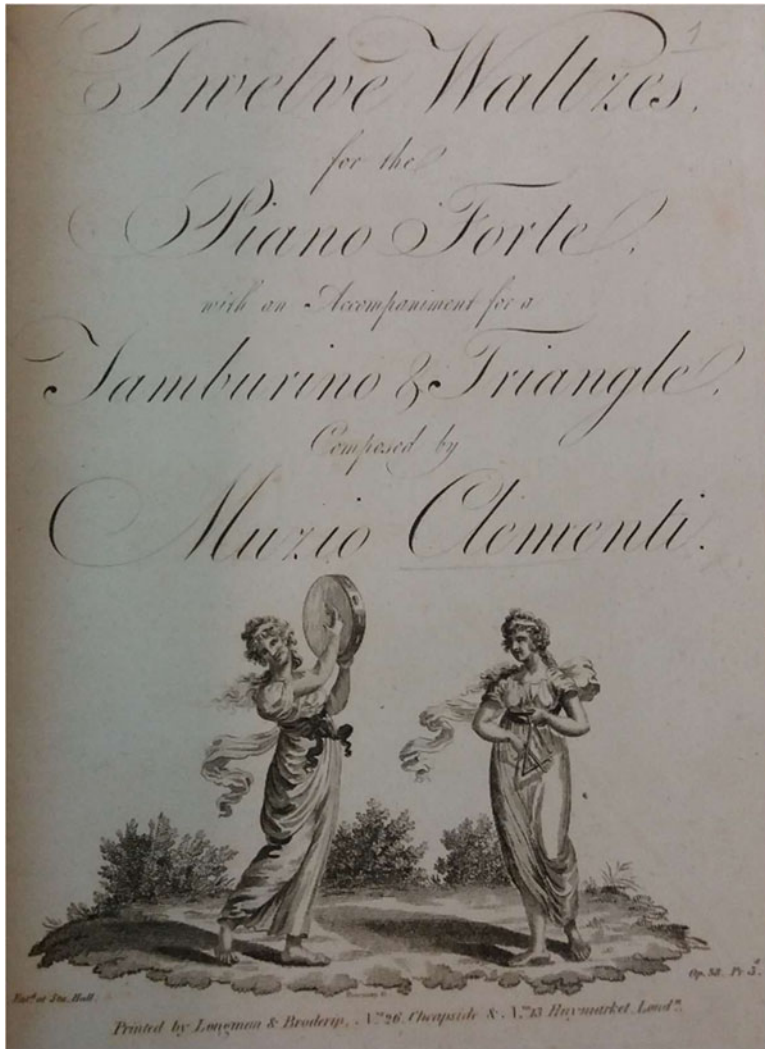


Fig. 4 Title page of Clementi's Op. 38 waltzes for piano, tambourine and triangle (London: Clementi & Co., 1802)



Ex. 6 Different types of beat in Dale's *Grand Sonata*, third movement, bars 108–110

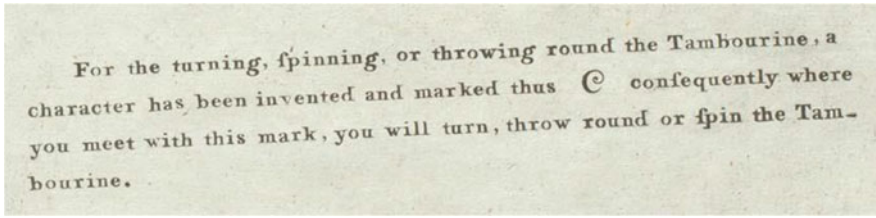


Fig. 5 Elaborate tambourine instructions in Preston's *Instructions for the Tambourine* (London: Preston, 1813)

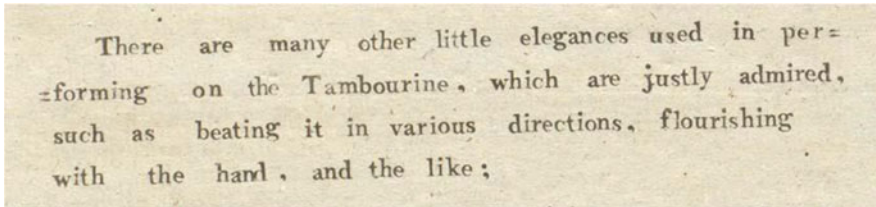


Fig. 6 Elaborate tambourine instructions in Bolton's *Instructions for the Tambourine* (London: Bolton, 1799)



Ex. 7 Further examples of beats in Dale's *Instructions for the Tambourine*

that are visualized in mid-eighteenth-century artwork (see Fig. 2) and described in the writings of Burke. Descriptions of tambourine techniques in all of the extant instruction manuals, among them 'turning, spinning or throwing round the tambourine' (Fig. 5) or 'beating it in various directions, flourishing with the hand, and the like' (Fig. 6), support the view that a new role for the female performer in private salons was being formed that went further than contemporary social customs would allow. Faulds describes how such works enabled the tambourine to leap 'from the stage to the music room and, in its very theatricality, threatened established notions of genteel female comportment'.⁴⁴ The considerable variety of turns, jingles and bass notes seen in the second and third movements of Dale's *Grand Sonata* represent a shift away from stillness and restraint, towards virtuosity and individual expression (Ex. 8).

This close-knit relationship between dance and the tambourine is apparent in Steibelt's adapted version of his ballet *La Retour du Zephyr* for piano, violin and tambourine.⁴⁵ An 1819 obituary in *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* states that *La Retour du Zephyr* was originally composed as a one-act ballet when Steibelt was living in Paris, where it was successfully premiered at the Opéra on

⁴⁴ Faulds, "Invitation pour la danse", 210.

⁴⁵ Some editions spell the title as *La Retour du Zéphir*. The arrangement is structured in six movements: i: Grazioso; ii: Rondo – Grazioso (the longest movement); iii: Adagio; iv: Moderato; v: Allegro Brillante; and vi: Presto.

Ex. 8 Tambourine part in Dale's *Grand Sonata*, second movement, bars 1–16, and third movement, bars 1–73 (London: Dale, 1800)

3 March 1802.⁴⁶ The ballet was Steibelt's last major work before returning to London; he possibly sensed an opportunity to adapt the work for a smaller, private salon ensemble in order to appeal to a broader sphere of customers and re-establish himself on the London musical scene after a four-year absence.⁴⁷ From the evidence of extant parts housed in the British Library, the tambourine features only in the last three movements, though it is possible that the instrument appeared in all six movements in other editions of the same work now lost.⁴⁸ However, the abundance of slurs in the piano part compared to the rest of the work, as well as the *grazioso* (first and second movement) and *adagio* (third movement) tempo markings, suggest that the tambourine may have been deemed inappropriate in the earlier movements. Furthermore, the numerous cadenza-like passages in the second movement (Ex. 9) probably indicate that Steibelt intended to make the pianoforte part the focal point of the movement, and any additional tambourine parts would have been an unnecessary distraction.

⁴⁶ *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, vol. 5 (London: Baldwin, Cradock & Joy, 1823): 562.

⁴⁷ Olivier Feigner, "Daniel Steibelt in 2015, the year of the 250th anniversary of his birth", *Forgotten Records*, <https://forgottenrecords.com/fr/writings> (accessed 26 April 2017).

⁴⁸ The British Library contains four editions of the ballet arranged for pianoforte with violin and tambourine accompaniment: g.230.ff.(4.) / h.925.g.(7.), published by Robert Birchall (1802); g.457.(6.), published by Dale (1802), to which the accompaniments are missing; h.301.r.(5.), published by Preston (1804), to which the pianoforte part is missing; and h.301.I.(2.), published by Skillern & Challoner (1806), to which the accompaniments are missing.



Ex. 9 Cadenza-like writing in the pianoforte part of Steibelt's arrangement of *La Retour du Zephyr*, second movement, bars 86–88

The final three movements of the arrangement are far more akin to the short rondos, waltzes and bacchanals that the Steibelts would have played in Prague. The fourth movement, a waltz, is structured in ternary form; unlike the majority of Steibelt's earlier waltzes it begins in a minor key (D minor), with the B section in the tonic major. In the A section the tambourine part tends to follow the rhythm of the piano melody, and largely consists of short gingle notes and semiquaver beats. By contrast, the part in the B section contains longer held notes; possibly a series of extended bass notes or a round bass are implied in bars 61–68 (Ex. 10).

The Scottish character of the fifth movement, which is rhythmically and melodically constructed like a polka, also provided a suitable opportunity for Steibelt to include a tambourine part. Indeed, Scottish music was a popular form of domestic and salon musical entertainment, especially in Britain, and the inclusion of a tambourine part would allow the vital rhythmic effects to be greatly enhanced.⁴⁹ Here, the tambourine provides extra rhythmic support to the buoyant dotted melody, whilst passages such as bars 25–26 and 29–30, in which the tambourine player was expected to alternate between flaps and semi flaps, create a choreographic visual spectacle that greatly enhances the relationship between music, dance and the female performer (see Ex. 11).

The tambourine part in the final movement functions in a similar way to that of the fourth movement, providing rhythmic doubling to the melodic line. The reasons for the instrument's inclusion here are clear. Both rhythmically and visually it contributes a suitably brisk finale to the ballet arrangement. The performer would doubtless have been expected to raise the tambourine above her head when playing at the final cadence in order to create the most spectacular ending possible. While its success in Paris is likely to have been the primary factor behind Steibelt's decision to arrange the ballet for domestic ensemble, its role in relation to the growing popularity of dance and music amongst girls in domestic settings and private salons is also significant. Rather than being used in a passive setting for the purposes of domestic pleasure, longer works that include a part for tambourine, such as Dale's *Grand Sonata* and Steibelt's adaptation of *La Retour du Zephyr*, contributed to a social climate allowing girls to play music in a more elaborate, dance-like fashion.

⁴⁹ George Thomson's *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice*, published in multiple volumes between 1793 and 1841, played a major role in this rise in popularity. Ignaz Pleyel provided the musical settings for the first volume, whilst Leopold Koželuch, Joseph Haydn, Beethoven, Carl Maria von Weber and Johann Nepomuk Hummel, amongst others, also contributed to the editions. Dale's Waltz Op. 16 No. 13 provides further support for this popular trend.

Majeur

The image shows four staves of musical notation for a tambourine part. The time signature is 3/8. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of sustained notes with various ornaments (trills, mordents) and rhythmic patterns. The second staff continues with similar patterns, including some notes with wavy lines above them. The third and fourth staves also feature sustained notes with ornaments and rhythmic variations.

Ex. 10 Sustained notes in the tambourine part of Steibelt's arrangement of *La Retour du Zephyr*, fourth movement, bars 45–84 (London: Preston, 1804)

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a tambourine part. The time signature is 2/4. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features alternating downwards and upwards stems, indicating rapid changes between flamps and semi flamps. The second staff continues with similar patterns, including some notes with wavy lines above them.

Ex. 11 Tambourine part in Steibelt's arrangement of *La Retour du Zephyr*, fifth movement, bars 21–42. The alternating downwards and upwards stems, bars 25–26, 29–30, 33–34, and 37–38, imply a rapid change between flamps and semi flamps. These provide considerable contrast to the dotted, Scottish polka-style rhythms.

In the wider context of British society in the aftermath of the French Revolution these pieces with tambourine parts were the perfect fit for female performers, in that they provided a way of combining beauty and elegance with individualism and display, without ever becoming dominating. The fashion subtly reflects the forging of a new feminine identity, one that, as Elizabeth Morgan argues, relied 'on [women's] powers of independent reason and individual will'.⁵⁰ In each work discussed in this article the tambourine predominantly takes an accompanying role: this is clear in the alternations between flamps and semi flamps, as seen, for example, in the short waltzes, as well as Steibelt's *Turkish Rondo* and much of the arrangement of *La Retour du Zephyr*; but the instrument is also displayed through the choreographic flourishes that make up much of the tambourine part in Dale's *Grand Sonata*. The combination of simplicity (in terms of structure, harmony and rhythmic patterns) and what might be called 'subtle virtuosity' (seen through the carefully choreographed turns or the dexterous beating patterns, jingles and bass notes) reflects, albeit modestly, the increasing opportunities for women to take part in domestic and salon music practices in ways contrary to social norms. The new-found freedom of expression reflected by these tambourine

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Morgan, 'The Accompanied Sonata and the Domestic Novel in Britain at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 36/2 (2012): 92.

parts helped to create a more enabling environment for the activity of female musicians in private salons.

By the late 1810s, changes in fashion, dictated as much by the emergence or transformation of new genres as by technological developments, played their part in marginalising the tambourine as a salon instrument. Later editions of Steibelt's arrangement of *La Retour du Zephyr*, for instance, are scored only for solo pianoforte (and occasionally violin), with the tambourine part omitted, while around 1825, Robert Birchall issued a new arrangement of Steibelt's *Turkish Rondo* for piano and violin, without tambourine accompaniment.⁵¹ New salon genres provided opportunities for female musicians to express themselves far more elaborately than any tambourine piece could. The transformation of the Lied as a suitable genre for women to perform and compose, together with innovative developments in piano construction, and the obvious limitations of the tambourine as an instrument, meant that by the 1810s there were far more impressive ways of showcasing female musicianship in the salon. Beautifully decorated patent tambourines, delicate gingle notes and elegant turns of the instrument and the body were trumped by emerging art forms that had the potential to revolutionise the role of female musicians in the salon.⁵² Furthermore, the Janissary stop became especially popular on pianos during the Viennese Biedermeier (1815–1848), which perhaps rendered any additional tambourine accompaniments surplus to requirements on the Continent. In the light of these developments, the tambourine, as far as I am able to tell, played very little part in salon or domestic music from the late 1810s onwards.

The tambourine represented a bridging point between the strictly defined role of women's musical activity in the eighteenth century and the greater freedom of expression, both in terms of performance and composition, that was beginning to emerge in the early nineteenth-century salon. The variety of visually stimulating choreographic techniques I have explored here, many of which would have been incorporated into other works *ad libitum*, provided creative opportunities for women that stood outside the boundaries of typical practice in the early nineteenth century. In this respect, the tambourine precedes the role of the Lied which, as David Gramit observed, 'provided a creative outlet for women, who were strongly discouraged from other public creativity, even while its position within the hierarchy of musical genres reinforced the ideologies that justified their exclusion'.⁵³ The brief fascination with the tambourine in domestic and salon music is very much of its time and place. While the combination of simplicity and subtle virtuosity still

⁵¹ The later arrangements of *La Retour du Zephyr* were published in London by Balls & Co. (1811, with violin accompaniment only), shelf mark GB-LBL, h.301.I.(3.); C. Wheatstone (1811, again only with violin accompaniment), shelf mark GB-LBL, g.443.p.(1.); and in Liverpool by Hime & Son (1816, for solo pianoforte), shelf mark GB-LBL, g.457.(10.). The 1825 arrangement of the *Turkish Rondo* published by Birchall, has the shelf mark GB-LBL, h.751.h.(15.).

⁵² See Aisling Kenny, 'Blurring the Gendered Dichotomies: Issues of Gender and Creativity for the Female Lied Composer', in *Women and the Nineteenth-Century Lied*, ed. Kenny and Wollenberg, 11–28, for a discussion of how and why the Lied became such a popular genre amongst female composers and performers in the early nineteenth century. See also Girling, 'Clementi and the Tambourine', 179–81, for further discussion on the decline of the tambourine in the 1810s.

⁵³ David Gramit, 'The Circulation of the Lied', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. James Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 308.

reflected the graceful, elegant attributes that girls were expected to display, it hinted at the growing sense of freedom and expression that would become key traits of nineteenth-century salon culture. Today, the limits of the performed repertory mean that the musical and historical significance of the tambourine's brief role in domestic and salon music is largely ignored. Although the fashion was short-lived, the role of the tambourine at the turn of the nineteenth century provides a small but significant example of the changing nature of female musicians' activity in the salon, and of the relationship between music and movement, as well as the visual dimension in salon performance. These works evidently formed part of a musical landscape in the early nineteenth-century salon that is richer and more varied than scholars have hitherto suspected.