

Delphine von Schauroth, Corinna-Sister

Amanda Lalonde 
 University of Saskatchewan
amanda.lalonde@usask.ca

Despite her current marginal position, the nineteenth-century pianist and composer Delphine von Schauroth (1813–1887) once ranked among the most prominent virtuosos of the nineteenth century and had connections with Fanny Hensel, Ferdinand Hiller, Josephine Lang, Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann and others. Drawing on large body of music criticism, as well as compositions, letters, images and literary works, this article presents a portrait of Schauroth as an artist, with an emphasis on the role of improvisation and the improvisatory in her pianism. In particular, the article fleshes out Robert Schumann’s characterization of Schauroth as a ‘Corinna-sister’, a reference to the improvising poetess of Madame de Stäel’s novel Corinne, or Italy. The article suggests that Schumann’s comparison highlights key facets of Schauroth’s status and character as a pianist and composer. Firstly, like Corinne, Schauroth was widely renowned as an eminent performer and was celebrated as a genius by critics, which was particularly notable for a woman musician in the early nineteenth century. Secondly, Schauroth was received as a creator, not only for her compositions, but also for her performances: in the late 1820s and early 1830s, in particular, critics responded to these performances with images of magical creation and an emphasis on the newness of her performance over the composer’s work. Thirdly, Schauroth displayed a varied practice of improvisation, and her compositions were understood as having an improvisatory character.

There is a remarkable photograph of the nineteenth-century pianist and composer Delphine von Schauroth (1813–1887) in Joanna Kane’s series *The Somnambulists: Photographic Portraits from Before Photography*.¹ Created long after Schauroth’s death, it captures her around the time of her first renown, when she toured England as a child prodigy in the 1820s and was regularly featured alongside Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn and others in articles about the greatest young pianists.² To create

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¹ Joanna Kane, *The Somnambulists: Photographic Portraits from Before Photography* (Stockport: Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2008), n.p.

² In 1823, as she began her English concert tour, *The London Magazine* noted that ‘[t]he three principal capitals of Germany, ... Vienna, Berlin, and Munich, have each at the present moment to boast of a great piano forte player, at a very juvenile age. Vienna, of Franz Ziszt [sic]; Berlin, of Mendelsohn [sic]; and Munich, of Mademoiselle Schauroth’. ‘Report of Music’, *The London Magazine* 8 (July 1823): 77. She is again mentioned alongside Liszt and

the photograph, the artist worked with positioning, lighting, film photography and digital manipulation to create vivid portraits from the cast collections of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society (Fig. 1).³

I begin with this photograph, not only because I find it strangely moving, but also because Kane's creation – from a spare historical source – of a photograph that seems to emphasize Schauroth's artistic vision and interiority invites a parallel scholarly portrait. While Schauroth regularly plays a supporting role in Felix Mendelssohn scholarship, due to their affectionate, artistic exchange in the early 1830s, she is seldom the central figure in musicological research.⁴ The main exception, an article by Dorothea Hofmann, makes a strong contribution to establishing Schauroth's biography and general reception as a pianist.⁵ This foundational work, along with recent short biographical pieces, support the present, more extensive examination of Schauroth's identity as a pianist and a composer.⁶

Schauroth left significant traces in newspapers and the musical press in the form of reviews and announcements of concerts and compositions, opinion pieces on

other prominent prodigies of the day in 'Youthful Composers', *The Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* 9 (1827): 454–5.

³ This particular photograph was created using a cast labelled 'Delphine Charuost, musician' in the Edinburgh Phrenological Society records. In their companion essay to the collection, Duncan Forbes and Roberta McGrath explain Kane's process. See Duncan Forbes and Roberta McGrath, 'Hieroglyphic Heads', in Joanna Kane, *The Somnambulists: Photographic Portraits from Before Photography* (Stockport: Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2008), n.p.

⁴ While biographies of Felix Mendelssohn generally mention Schauroth to some extent, substantial discussion of her abilities and musical relationship with Mendelssohn can be found in the following: Annegret Huber, *Das 'Lied ohne Worte' als kunstübergreifendes Experiment: Eine komparatistische Studie zur Intermedialität des Instrumentallicdes 1830–1850* (Tutzing: H. Schneider, 2006), 299–300; Christa Jost, 'Im Odeon und auf der Wies'n Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy fand das Leben in München behaglicher als in Berlin', *Literatur in Bayern* 49 (1997): 52–7; Brigitte Richter, 'Delphine von Schauroth', in *Frauen um Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1997), 74–8; Monika Schwarz-Danuser, 'Delphine von Schauroth versus Cécile Mendelssohn Bartholdy geb. Jeanrenaud. Femme fatale versus Madonna?' in *Frauen um Felix*, ed. Veronika Leggewie (Würzburg: Edition Linea classica, 2002), 121–40; R. Larry Todd, *Mendelssohn: A Life in Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 228–31, 234, 248–50, 289, 291, 402, 411. In addition, ethnomusicologist Helen Martens conducted substantial archival research to inform her novelistic treatment of Mendelssohn and Schauroth's relationship: Helen Martens, *Felix Mendelssohn: Out of the Depths of His Heart* (Enumclaw, WA: Annotation Press, 2009). Schauroth also appears in scholarship about other women musicians of the nineteenth century. For her relationship with Josephine Lang, see Harald Krebs and Sharon Krebs, *Josephine Lang: Her Life and Songs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 44, 226. On her encounters with Fanny Hensel, see Christian Lambour, 'Fanny Hensel – Die Pianistin: Teil V – Fanny Hensel beurteilt die Pianisten ihrer Generation', *Mendelssohn-Studien* 15 (2007): 252–7; R. Larry Todd, *Fanny Hensel: The Other Mendelssohn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 144, 237.

⁵ Dorothea Hofmann, "'Tag und Nacht möchte man so spielen hören ...". Notizen zu Delphine von Schauroth – Kritiken als biographische Quelle', *Musik in Bayern* 60 (2001): 59–78.

⁶ Monika Schwarz-Danuser, 'Schauroth, Delphine von, geschiedene Hill Handley, geschiedene Henniger von Eberg, geschiedene Knight', in *Frauen in Sachsen-Anhalt: Ein biographisch-bibliographisch Lexikon vom Mittelalter bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Bohlau, 2016), 393–96. While previous scholarship has mentioned the publication of Schauroth's compositions and Robert Schumann's responses, no scholars have engaged substantially with her compositions.



Fig. 1 Joanna Kane, 'Delphine von Schauroth, German Pianist and Composer' © Joanna Kane, *The Somnambulists* (Stockport, England: Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2008)

the state of piano performance and the rank of pianists, and society reporting. The present article draws on over 170 such pieces in contemporaneous German-, English- and French-language periodicals, a body of writings that attests to Schauroth's significant presence in the musical culture of the nineteenth century. As Natasha Loges asserts, drawing on work by Christopher Dingle, 'such texts, especially en masse, constitute a reasonably reliable "continuous contemporaneous record", often penned soon after concerts and therefore revealing entrenched perceptions'.⁷ That few other sources relating to Schauroth are extant speaks not to her historical insignificance, but rather to the fact that, unlike many of the other renowned women musicians of the nineteenth century, Schauroth was neither a member of an artistic family, nor a teacher, nor survived by children who upheld her legacy (and preserved her papers); she thus departed without these primary contexts for the shaping and passing down of her artistic narrative and character.⁸

⁷ Natasha Loges, 'Clara Schumann's Legacy as a Teacher', in *Clara Schumann Studies*, ed. Joe Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 275.

⁸ Children and students played a pronounced role as early biographers of other nineteenth-century musical women. Fanny Hensel's son, Sebastian Hensel, devoted significant attention to her legacy in his chronicle of the Mendelssohn family. Sebastian Hensel, *Die Familie Mendelssohn, 1729–1847, nach Briefen und Tagebüchern*, 3 vols (Berlin: B. Behr, 1879). As Harald Krebs notes, Josephine Lang's son, Heinrich, was also an important early biographer for her. Harald Krebs, 'The "Power of Class" in a New Perspective', *Nineteenth Century Music Review* 4 (2007): 39. Clara Schumann's daughter Marie preserved her diaries and oversaw Berthold Litzmann's biography of Schumann. Nancy Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, rev. ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 139. In contrast, Schauroth's unstable family life likely contributed to the dearth of her preserved personal papers. There is record of one child, Charles, from Schauroth's short-lived first marriage

Schauroth's scattered legacy attests to how even prominent musical women can be forgotten after they are no longer present, or are remembered more for their life stories than for their musical contributions.⁹ While the writings of critics cannot be taken at face value, especially in isolation, by considering a large collection of these texts and contextualising them alongside compositions, letters, images and literary works, I create one possible composite image of Schauroth.

Who was Delphine von Schauroth as an artist? The portrait sketched by this article, inspired by Kane's photograph that is so evocative of Schauroth's inner vision, takes a second cue from Robert Schumann's 1835 review of Schauroth's *Sonate brillante*, in which he bestows upon her the title of 'Corinna-sister' ('Corinna-Schwester').¹⁰ Corinne, the central character of Madame de Staël's novel *Corinne, or Italy*, presented a model of a woman widely received as a genius in an era when women's artistry was often treated as an anomaly. In the opening scene, Corinne is ushered to the Capitol in Rome and greeted by throngs of admirers: in recognition of her poetic achievements, she is to be crowned with laurels in a public ceremony.¹¹ Corinne is an *improvisatrice* – an improvising poet – and her art is spontaneous, oral, performed, and musical.

Published in the original French as well as in English and German translations in 1807, *Corinne* captured imaginations throughout the nineteenth century: its influence was particularly evident in the abundance of literary works that reproduced the character type of the feminine artistic genius and through female poets who performed or posed as improvisers.¹² So wide was Corinne's reach, extending even to music, that some recent scholarship has figured her as a touchstone for the nineteenth-century improvisatory.¹³ In *Romanticism and Improvisation, 1750–1850*, a

(1833–c.1837) to Edwin Hill-Handley, but Schauroth had to leave him in England when she separated from Hill-Handley, and he died at the age of four. Her other marriages, to Stephan Heninger Freiherr von Eberg in 1848 and to Edward Knight in 1856, both ended in divorce and with no record of children. Schwarz-Danuser, 'Schauroth, Delphine von', 394–5.

⁹ Matthew Head, 'Rethinking Authorship Through Women Composers: *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution*, by Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson', *Women & Music* 6 (2002): 36–50.

¹⁰ Robert Schumann, 'Delphine Hill Handley, née de Schauroth, Sonate brillante (C-Moll). 1 Fl. 45 kr. Wien, Diabelli', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 2, no. 31 (17 April 1835): 125.

¹¹ Madame de Staël, *Corinne, or Italy*, trans. Sylvia Raphael (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 33–4.

¹² Notable recent contributions about the impact of *Corinne* include: Angela Esterhammer, *Romanticism and Improvisation, 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 78–103, 110–28; Linda M. Lewis, *Germaine de Staël, George, Sand, and the Victorian Woman Artist* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003); Kari E. Lokke, *Tracing Women's Romanticism: Gender, History, and Transcendence* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Judith E. Martin, *Germaine de Staël in Germany: Gender and Literary Authority (1800–1850)* (Plymouth: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011); Patrick H. Vincent, *The Romantic Poetess: European Culture, Politics, and Gender 1820–1840* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2004). Corinne figures sometimes took the form of musicians in literary works, as is demonstrated by Julia Effertz, 'Between Ideal and Performance: Corinne in Female-Authored Singer Narratives of the 1830s', in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society, and the Sister Arts*, ed. Tili Boon Cuille and Karyna Szmurlo (Lanham: Bucknell University Press, 2013): 281–301; and Phyllis Weliver, 'George Eliot and the Prima Donna's "Script"', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 40/1–2 (2010): 103–20.

¹³ On the influence of *Corinne* in the musical realm, see Melina Esse, 'Encountering the *Improvisatrice* in Italian Opera', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 66/3 (2013):

study that recovers the practice of poetic extemporization in that period, Angela Esterhammer calls Corinne ‘the avatar of the improvisatrice for nineteenth-century Europe’.¹⁴ In the realm of music, Dana Gooley’s *Fantasies of Improvisation*, which addresses ‘free playing’ on the piano, takes the painting *Corinne au cap Misène* by Francois Gérard as its cover image and returns throughout to the rousing force of the ‘cult of Corinne’ on the culture of musical improvisation in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ Although Gooley has shown that Corinne – as *improvisatrice* – was a stirring figure for male improvising pianists such as Carl Loewe and Franz Liszt, these artists can only partially reflect the potent combination of womanhood, artistic genius and improvisation that Corinne so compellingly embodied.¹⁶

It is in this context that I suggest Schumann’s comparison of Schauroth to Corinne highlights key facets of her status and character as a pianist and composer. In this article, I first address how, like Corinne, Schauroth was widely renowned as an eminent performer and was celebrated as a genius by critics, which was particularly notable for a woman musician in the early nineteenth century.¹⁷ Secondly, I demonstrate that Schauroth was received as a creator. While her work as a composer and performer of her own pieces would naturally distinguish her in this way, I also argue that the reception of Schauroth as a pianist, particularly in the late 1820s and early 1830s, depicts her as a creative artist. I suggest that some critics push slightly – but significantly – beyond the early Romantic ideal of the ‘genius of performance’, which has been established by Mary Hunter.¹⁸ Rather than suggesting that Schauroth merges her own self with that of the composer, such that the boundaries between creator and re-creator of the composition are obscured, I show that these critics often efface the composer or emphasize the newness of Schauroth’s performed creation above the composer’s work. And thirdly, as befits a comparison to an *improvisatrice*, there is the matter of improvisation and the improvisatory. As I will address, Corinne’s practice of improvisation is highly varied, and the modest historical record of Schauroth’s improvisatory acts mirrors this diversity. Furthermore, Schauroth’s compositions were understood as having an improvisatory character, as is evident in her reception. Through this threefold examination, then, Corinne becomes a touchstone for establishing Schauroth’s own character as an artist. Rather than asserting that Schauroth was widely received

709–70; Melina Esse, *Singing Sappho* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021); Dana Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation: Free Playing in Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Ellen Lockhart, *Animation, Plasticity, and Music in Italy, 1770–1830* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 91–102.

¹⁴ Esterhammer, *Romanticism and Improvisation*, 85.

¹⁵ For Gooley’s introduction of the term ‘free playing’, see Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 7–8.

¹⁶ Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 134–5, 222. Gooley addresses the poetic improvisation of Karoline Leonhardt-Lyser, called ‘Deutschlands Corinna’ (141–6), and briefly mentions a number of women pianists.

¹⁷ On the gendered nature of genius in the nineteenth century, see Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (London: The Women’s Press, 1989); Marcia Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Žarko Cvejić, ‘Gender and the Critical Reception of Virtuosity’, *The Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity, c. 1815–c. 1850* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 214–61.

¹⁸ Mary Hunter ‘“To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer”: The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58 (2005): 357–98, esp. 370.

as a Corinna-sister in the nineteenth century, I would suggest that Schumann's comparison draws attention to the facets of Schauroth's artistic profile that she shared with Corinne and that would have been especially marked in a nineteenth-century woman artist: wide renown and critical recognition as a genius, prominence as a creator and an association with improvisation and the improvisatory.

Star of the First Magnitude: Schauroth's Renown as Virtuosa and Musical Genius

Since Schauroth is little known today (and is usually remembered in connection with Felix Mendelssohn), examining her reception and standing as an artist is crucial to grasping the meaningfulness of the comparison to Corinne, that archetype of the feminine artistic genius. As I demonstrate here, Schauroth developed a European renown through her travels to England and France. As early critics noted, she surpassed the musical expectations for a *Wunderkind*, such that estimations of her genius went beyond remarks on mere precocity. Indeed, reviewers noted her expressivity and creative powers as signs of her genius throughout her career, and critics held her to be equal to (or even above) other nineteenth-century pianists who are far better recognized today. Furthermore, her artistic reputation was sustained through many stages of her life, despite some prolonged absences from public performance.

Schauroth began performing in public as a nine-year-old child in 1822 and was immediately recognized as exceptional, even among *Wunderkinder*.¹⁹ An acrostic poem by an anonymous Darmstadt poet, which spells out her first and last names in the original German, attests to the rarity of her talent and the early revelation of her genius:

That the genius early of its own accord
presses upwards, like the eagle with daring wing
lies openly before us a new example.
Consider, connoisseur! the talent very carefully
that is here, you musical critics!
you found this hardly anywhere
I won't name it, since without difficulty
you yourselves will discover the wonder's name immediately.

Dass das Genie früh aus sich selbst heraus
empordringt, wie der Aar mit kühnem Fittich
liegt uns ein neues Beispiel offen da.
Prüft, Kenner! dies Talent nur recht genau
herbei, ihr musikal'schen Kritiker!
ihr fandet das wohl schwerlich irgendwo
Nicht nenn' ich es, denn ohne Schwierigkeit
entdeckt ihr selbst des Wunders Namen gleich.²⁰

¹⁹ The earliest evidence found of her public career is a review of a concert in Mannheim that took place on 31 March 1822. 'Miscellen', *Flora. Ein Unterhaltungs-Blatt* 2, no. 58 (11 April 1822): 232.

²⁰ In this double acrostic poem, the first letters of the lines spell out 'Delphine', and the final letters spell 'Schauroth'. According to the article in which it appears, the poem was written in March of 1822, which coincides with her first public performances. 'Miscellen', *Flora ein Unterhaltungs-Blatt* 2, no. 87 (31 May 1822): 348. Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

In the first three lines of the poem, the young Schauroth's genius is aligned with the sublime and surprisingly masculine imagery of the ascendant eagle.²¹ Admired for its command of great heights and associated with Zeus and Pindar (the 'Theban Eagle'), the eagle was invoked by Romantic poets as a symbol of their artistic powers.²² Rather than being carried aloft by the eagle – a Ganymede-figure or servant to the gods – Schauroth's upward-pressing, aquiline genius in this poem situates her in this artistic milieu. She is thus figured, even as a young girl, as an original creative genius.

Schauroth's debut in Germany was soon followed by an excursion to England, where her reception was no less fervent. In 1823, prior to her first public appearances in London, an enthusiastic introduction to Schauroth's talents in which her burgeoning genius was emphasized appeared in *The European Magazine and London Review*:

the greatest pleasure we can experience ... consist[s] in fostering the talents of extraordinary genius ... Actuated by these sentiments, we feel an honourable pride in being able to give the testimony of our warmest applause to a *young foreigner*, whose musical talents are of the first order.²³

The critic further emphasizes her distinction as an artist by declaring that she is 'richly endowed with intuitive genius' due to the rare 'sentiment and expression' of her playing.²⁴ In an account from London appearing later that year in the *Zeitung für Theater, Musik, und bildende Künste*, the critic reports that Schauroth played 'not only with all technical precision, but her little fingers also betrayed through a meaningful touch and expressive marking, which often rose to enthusiasm, that within her a promising artist-genius developed with swift steps' ('nicht allein mit aller technischen Präcision, sondern ihre kleinen Fingerchen verriethen auch durch einen bedeutungsvollen Anschalg und ausdrucksvolle Markirung, die oft bis zur Begeisterung stieg, daß sich in ihr ein hoffnungsreiches Künstler-Genie mit schnellen Schritten entwickelt').²⁵ In these and other pieces of reception from this stage of her career, Schauroth's artistic genius is associated with her deep expressivity and musical understanding, which defy the expectations that a child performer's precise technical abilities would render them little more than a musical automaton.²⁶

²¹ For a summary of the association of the sublime with the masculine, see Judy Lochhead, 'The Sublime, the Ineffable, and Other Dangerous Aesthetics', *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 12 (2008): 63–74.

²² On the association of Pindar with the musical sublime, see Mark Evan Bonds, 'The Symphony as Pindaric Ode', in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 131–53. On the use of eagle imagery by Romantic poets, see Michael Ferber, *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 38–43.

²³ 'Intelligence Relative to the Fine Arts', *The European Magazine and London Review* (June 1823): 542.

²⁴ 'Intelligence Relative to the Fine Arts', 542.

²⁵ 'Kunst Nachrichten aus London', *Zeitung für Theater, Musik, und bildende Künste, zur Unterhaltung gebildeter, unbefangener Leser* 3, no. 45 (8 November 1823): 179.

²⁶ On the understanding of child prodigies as musical automata, see Carolyn Abbate, 'Outside Ravel's Tomb', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52 (1999): 480–81; Annette Richards, 'Automatic Genius: Mozart and the Mechanical Sublime', *Music & Letters* 80 (1999): 381–2.

In Paris, too, which was teeming with virtuosi in the 1820s, Schauroth did not fail to make an impression.²⁷ In addition to a positive reception in the press – *Le Miroir des Spectacles, des Lettres, des Moeurs et des Arts* remarked on her ‘very singular precocity’²⁸ – her performances in private homes drew remarks from prominent figures. In Stendhal’s *Vie de Rossini*, for instance, the author frequently interrupts his central focus with observations about musical culture in the French capital. Amongst a discussion of the qualities of various opera singers and the status of music as the most powerful of the fine arts, he proclaims in an aside that ‘Mademoiselle de Schauroth, nine years old and a famous pianist, foretells all the madness of genius’.²⁹ Stendhal expresses a similar opinion of Schauroth in a note to Victor Jacquemont, though in less romantic terms and perhaps recalling the phrenological interest in young musical geniuses that Schauroth inspired earlier: ‘Come to Mme Pasta’s at 10 o’clock ... There will be Paer, Mlle Paer, Mme Gilbing and, above all, Mlle Shauraw [*sic*], a German with a big head like Mozart and who plays the piano at nine years old like Dussek at 40.’³⁰ In addition to the comparison to Dussek, by measuring her head against Mozart’s, Stendhal’s alludes to Schauroth’s exceptional musical (and perhaps creative) powers.

Schauroth’s wide recognition in the Paris of the mid 1820s, beyond the circles that assembled in the homes of artists, is further suggested by a lithograph of the young virtuosa in profile by the Parisian studio of Langlumé (Fig. 2).³¹ In response to the vogue for collectible lithographic portrait prints that swept Paris in the 1820s, studios such as Langlumé rapidly produced images of prominent individuals – such as artists, scientists and political figures – who captured the attention of the public.³² As such, sitting for a lithographic portrait was somewhat of a rite of passage for celebrated artists in the early nineteenth century.³³ The epigraph to the portrait, taken

²⁷ Schauroth first performed in France in 1823, and was again in Paris from 1824–25 (when she studied with Kalkbrenner) and in 1827. ‘Concert: De Mlle Delphine Schauroth, âgée de 9 ans. (9 mai 1823)’, *Le Miroir des Spectacles, des Lettres, des Moeurs et des Arts* no. 840 (15 May 1823): 3; ‘Foreign Music Report’, *The Harmonicon* 2, no. 18 (June 1824): 119; ‘Concerts’, *Revue Musicale* 1 (1827): 167–8. Schauroth actually would have been ten years old at the time of the 1823 concert.

²⁸ ‘Concert: De Mlle Delphine Schauroth’, 3.

²⁹ Later in the volume, he predicts that she will become ‘the Paganini of the piano’. Stendhal, *Vie de Rossini* (Paris: M. Lévy frères, 1854), 276, 350. Although the book was first published in 1824, these notes do not seem to appear until the revised edition of 1854. As a staunch advocate for the individualistic creative displays of singers, Stendhal may have appreciated Schauroth’s marriage of technical skill and distinctive expressiveness. As Melina Esse notes, Stendhal protested Rossini’s supposed reigning in of the inventive powers of singers; Melina Esse, *Singing Sappho*, 59.

³⁰ Stendhal (Henri Beyle) to Victor Jacquemont, Paris, [day unknown] May 1823, in *Correspondance de Stendhal*, vol. 2, ed. Henri Martineau and Victor Del Litto (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 747.

³¹ It is likely that the lithograph is from this time, both due to Schauroth’s youthful appearance and the fact that Pierre Langlumé was active in Paris as a lithographer from 1820 until his death in 1830. ‘Langlume Pierre’, *Dictionnaire des imprimeurs-lithographes du XIXe siècle*, École nationale des chartes, <http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/imprimeurs/node/22611> (1 June 2022).

³² Christine Giviskos, *Set in Stone: Lithography in Paris, 1815–1900* (Munich: Hirmer, Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, 2018), 54.

³³ Indeed, a few years later, Felix Mendelssohn recounts in a letter to his sister Rebecka that he had turned down being the subject of a lithograph (Schauroth was to have performed



Fig. 2 Lithograph of Delphine von Schauroth by Langlumé

from Tasso's *Gerusalemme conquistata*, speaks to Schauroth's captivating presence as an artist and suggests her originality. Excerpted from a description of music in the garden of Armida, the lines translate to: 'The others fell silent to listen intently / And

during his sitting to keep his expression cheerful!) and would continue to do so in case he didn't end up being a 'great man'. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to Rebecka Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Paris, 20, 23 and 24 December 1831, in Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Sämtliche Briefe II: Juli 1830 bis Juli 1832*, ed. Anja Morgenstern and Ute Wald (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2009), 439.

the winds stopped the whispers in the air' ('tacquero gli altri ad ascoltare intenti, / e fermaro i susurri in aria i venti').³⁴ By drawing a comparison with Armida, the lithograph places Schueroth within the lineage of women, including the fictional Corinne, who are endowed with powers of creation. In the novel, Corinne is aligned with Armida by her lover to be, Lord Nelvil, for both her genius and her alluring nature.³⁵ Armida is also used in the discourse on genius as a figure 'endowed with the powers of creation ex nihilo', as Dale Townshend and Angela Wright point out. They note that Edward Young, in his influential treatise on genius *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), writes that, 'the pen of an *Original* writer, like Armida's wand, out of a barren waste calls a blooming spring'.³⁶ As we shall see, the depiction of Schueroth's pianistic creative powers as magical is also evident in her reception in the late 1820s and early 1830s.

As encountered previously in comments about Schueroth's precocity, throughout her early career comparisons of her abilities to those of the foremost mature performers, in addition to other youthful sensations, were common. In a remark similar to Stendhal's, *The European Magazine and London Review* reported in 1823 that 'Paer describes her as a performer equal to *Moschelles* [*sic*], although she is only *nine years of age!*'³⁷ Undoubtedly, the artist against whom her abilities were most often measured was Franz Liszt, who was one and a half years her senior and who had made his public Viennese debut in 1822, not long after she had made hers in Mannheim.³⁸ A critic from *Eos, Zeitschrift aus Bayern*, for instance, attempted to capture her robust virtuosity by calling her a 'golden-locked female Liszt' ('goldgelockte weibliche Liszt'), remarking on her 'strength and perseverance' ('Kraft und Ausdauer'), which could not be expected from 'an earthly ten-year-old girl' ('einem irdischen 10jährigen Mädchen').³⁹ However, it was just as common for Schueroth and Liszt to be treated as equally talented contemporaries at this early stage. As a correspondent from Paris for the *Abend-Zeitung* reports in 1825: 'since I am writing about music, the wonderful pair, the likes of whom the world has probably never seen, comes to mind. All of the papers speak unanimously of the extraordinary talents of the eleven-and-a-half-year-old Mlle. Schueroth and the thirteen-year-old Litz [*sic*]. Both give concerts on the piano and stand almost alongside the greatest masters'.⁴⁰ Indeed, such was her

³⁴ Torquato Tasso, *Gerusalemme conquistata*, Oxford Text Archive, <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12024/0872>.

³⁵ Staël, *Corinne*, 40.

³⁶ Dale Townshend and Angela Wright, 'Gothic and Romantic Engagements: The Critical Reception of Ann Radcliffe, 1789–1850', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, ed. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4–5.

³⁷ 'Intelligence Relative to the Fine Arts', 542. Emphasis in original.

³⁸ Liszt had twice performed publicly in Oedenburg and Pressburg in 1820, prior to his Viennese debut. Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 68, 77–8.

³⁹ 'Conzert', *Eos, Zeitschrift aus Bayern* no. 40 (10 March 1824): 160.

⁴⁰ 'Da ich von Musik schreibe, so fällt mir das wundervolle Paar ein, wie die Welt es wahrscheinlich noch nicht sah. Alle Blätter reden einstimmig von den ausserordentlichen Talenten der 11 ½ jährigen Mlle. Schueroth, und dem 13jährigen Litz [*sic*]. Beide geben Concerte auf dem Clavier und stehen fast neben den größten Meistern'. 'Correspondenz-Nachrichten. Aus Paris', *Abend-Zeitung* no. 127 (28 May 1825): 508. See note 2 for another article in which Schueroth is ranked similarly.

reputation as a young virtuosa, that when Franz Liszt was introduced to the Munich public in the journal *Flora* in 1823, his abilities were compared to hers.⁴¹

Schauroth's renown and standing as an artist only flourished to a greater degree as she began to outgrow the label of *Wunderkind*. In 1825, Schauroth was ranked among the greatest so-called German pianists who were in Paris at the time (including Hummel, Moscheles, Kalkbrenner, Liszt, the Herz brothers and Pixis) by the *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.⁴² By the late 1820s, various publications, including the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, agreed that she held a place among the most outstanding pianists.⁴³

It is even more remarkable that Schauroth's renown flourished in the late 1830s and early 1840s, when her public performance was impeded by class constraints to a greater extent after she had reached womanhood – and possibly further inhibited after her reputation had been damaged by her separation from her first husband.⁴⁴ After an apparent hiatus from public performances for several years during her first marriage to Edwin Hill-Handley, she returned to the stage for several concerts in 1837 and performed sporadically thereafter.⁴⁵ According to some accounts, her artistry had only improved: in a Munich concert for the Beethoven monument in 1837, Schauroth performed an unnamed Beethoven concerto, and a critic responded that, 'those who heard Frau v. Hill-Handley-Schauroth play in the past must doubly admire the extraordinary mastery in relation to the enormous difficulties [of the work], and the clarity and feeling of the performance, which this true artist has since then achieved to a much higher degree'.⁴⁶ Her reception in the journal *Der Bazar für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Geselligkeit* for her participation in a benefit concert not only lauds her abilities, but also attests to her wide recognition: 'where enormous technique is united with deep, eternally beautiful feelings in such a high degree, the highest has been achieved ... Mrs. von Hill-Handley, née von Schauroth, has through artistic merit won great respect and a widespread reputation, not only in Munich, but almost in the whole wide world'.⁴⁷

⁴¹ 'Miscellen', *Flora: Ein Unterhaltungs-Blatt* 3, no. 163 (16 October 1823): 652.

⁴² 'Korrespondenz', *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 2, no. 11 (16 March 1825): 85.

⁴³ 'Nachrichten', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 30, no. 22 (28 May 1828): 360. See also 'Miscellen zur Tagsgeschichte', *Flora: Ein Unterhaltungs-Blatt* no. 57 (20 March 1829): 235–6; 'Ueber das erste abonnierte Konzert vom 18. März', *Munchener Musikzeitung* 2, no. 26 (28 March 1829): 408.

⁴⁴ For more on Schauroth's class standing and how class, age and marriage impacted her career, see Hofmann, 'Tag und Nacht', 63–6. For more on how class impacted German women musicians in the nineteenth century, see Krebs, 'The "Power of Class" in a New Perspective', 37–48; and Nancy Reich, 'The Power of Class: Fanny Hensel', in *Mendelssohn and his World*, ed. R. Larry Todd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991): 86–99.

⁴⁵ Schauroth's separation and return to Munich was announced in the musical press; see 'Vermischtes', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 6, no. 11 (7 February 1837): 46.

⁴⁶ 'wer Frau v. Hill-Handley-Schauroth früher spielten hörte, mußte in Beziehung auch der größten Schwierigkeiten und in Klarheit und Gefühl des Vortrages doppelt die ausserordentlicher Meisterschaft bewundern, welche diese Wahre Künstlerin seitdem in noch viel höherem Grade sich errungen'; 'Revue der Einläufe', *Der Nürnberger Lustwandler*, no. 44 (13 April 1837): 173–4.

⁴⁷ 'wo sich enorme Technik mit tiefem, ewig schönem Gefühle in so hohem Grade vereint, ist das Höchste geleistet ... Frau von Hill-Handley, geborne von Schauroth, hat sich durch künstlerische Verdienste nicht nur in München, sondern beinahe in der ganzen

At this point, her status as one of the great virtuoso pianists seems to have been firmly established. An 1839 article about contemporary piano playing and composition in the *Wiener Zeitung*, for instance, speaks to the abundance of exceptional, nearly equally skilled pianists and lists the foremost examples: ‘Thalberg, Liszt, Henselt, Döhler, Taubert – yes, even a number of women artists, at their peak Delphine Handley-Schuroth, who unfortunately made her exit from the public arena a while ago, emblazon this horizon as stars of the first magnitude’ (‘Thalberg, Liszt, Henselt, Döhler, Taubert – ja selbst eine Reihe von Künstlerinnen, die leider vom Schauplatze der Oeffentlichkeit abgetretene Delphine Handley-Schuroth noch vor Kurzem an ihrer Spitze, schmücken als Sterne erster Größe diesen Horizont’).⁴⁸ In the 1841 edition of the Brockhaus *Conversations-Lexikon*, too, she is one of the few women pianists to earn the distinction of being included in the entry on virtuosi, although here, perhaps because she is regarded as having retired from public performance, Clara Wieck Schumann and Marie Pleyel are recognized as the leading women.⁴⁹

After two additional short-lived marriages and the withdrawals from public performance that accompanied them, Schuroth re-emerged in 1861, some twenty years after she had last appeared publicly.⁵⁰ Although the musical press assumed the task of reintroducing her to the public, it would appear that her strong reputation endured the years of silence. Among musicians, including Ignaz Moscheles, Ferdinand Hiller, Giacomo Meyerbeer and Franz Liszt, her talents were still highly regarded.⁵¹

Like Stäel’s Corinne, Schuroth experienced wide renown and critical recognition. While the recent surge of research on Clara Schumann around the bicentenary of her birth is most welcome (the author of the present article has contributed to it, to a small extent), we must be careful not to let it obscure other artists who are less well known.⁵² Although Schuroth’s performance career was certainly not as

großen Welt hohe Achtung und ansgebreiteten Ruf’ erworben; ‘Konzert zu Beethovens Monument’, *Der Bazar für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Geselligkeit* no. 55 (7 April 1837): 220.

⁴⁸ ‘Ueber Clavier-spiel und Clavier-Composition’, *Wiener Zeitung* no. 292 (19 December 1839): 1839.

⁴⁹ ‘Delphine von Schuroth, Hofdame in München, aus der Künstlerwelt zurückgetreten, eine ausgezeichnete, geistvolle Vistuosin, besonders in Vortrage gediegener Compositionen, wie K. M. von Weber’s, Beethoven’s’. *Conversations-Lexikon der Gegenwart*, vol 23 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1841), s.v. ‘Virtuosen’, 268.

⁵⁰ For information on her second and third marriages, see note 7. I have not been able to find any evidence of concerts by Schuroth between March 1841 and February 1861 (when she performed in a charity concert); see ‘Vermischtes’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 14, no. 22 (15 March 1841): 90; ‘Kunst und Wissenschaft’, *Badesche Landeszeitung* (23 February 1861).

⁵¹ Moscheles referred to Schuroth as an ‘outstanding pianist’ in an 1861 letter to Max Maria von Weber. Ignaz Moscheles to Max Maria von Weber, Leipzig, September 1861, Carl Maria von Weber Gesamtausgabe, <https://weber-gesamtausgabe.de/de/A001353/Korrespondenz/A045798.html>. Ferdinand Hiller helped Schuroth to arrange concerts in the 1860s. Martens, *Felix Mendelssohn*, 312–16. Wilhelm von Lenz recounts visiting Schuroth with Meyerbeer in 1862. Wilhelm von Lenz, ‘Berliner Bekanschaften’, *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* 25 (13 September 1871): 291–4. Liszt and Schuroth exchanged letters in the late 1860s, and he may have been involved in her admission to the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein* in 1870, addressed later in this article.

⁵² Following the bicentenary in 2019, several major books (and articles too numerous to list) on Schumann have been released: Beatrix Borchard, *Clara Schumann: Musik als Lebensform – Neue Quellen – andere Schreibweisen* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2019); Joe

sustained as Schumann's, nor was she as productive as a published composer, from the late 1820s until the early 1840s her reputation was truly dazzling, and some publications placed her above Schumann. That Schauroth is virtually unknown today speaks more to the workings of history than to her renown in the nineteenth century. From her first public appearances in childhood, Schauroth was an exceptionally highly acclaimed pianist. The remarks by critics explored above invoke genius in relation to her inner engagement with music, her artistic maturity and the sublime power of her artistry as a performer; but only occasionally do they hint at her reception as a creator. As we will see, this aspect of the understanding of Schauroth's character as a pianist flourished in the late 1820s and early 1830s.

Art-Magic: Schauroth as Creator

Although Corinne is a performing artist, she is exceptional as a woman in that she is first and foremost understood as creative, rather than reproductive.⁵³ This holds true even as the novel depicts her performing not only her original improvisations, but also the works of others.⁵⁴ From the earliest days of her musical career, Schauroth, too, was understood in this way. I begin by examining the most apparent evidence of her reputation as a creative artist: pieces of music criticism that feature comments about Schauroth's performances of her own works or that mention her work as a composer, and the role of composition in her relationship with Felix Mendelssohn. I then turn to the reception of Schauroth as a pianist in the late 1820s and early 1830s and suggest that, at this point in her career, critics often depict her pianism as an active, creative force, even in her performances of works by other composers.

Although many reviews of Schauroth's performances do not note her repertoire at all, thus making it difficult to determine the extent to which she played her own compositions, scattered mentions of such performances throughout her career suggest that she may have featured her own works with some regularity. An early indication that Schauroth was regarded not only as a performer, but also in terms of her own compositional artistry can be seen in a review in *The London Magazine* from 1823, which reports that Schauroth 'played some of the most difficult pieces of our masters, as well as her own, in a manner to satisfy the ablest professors'.⁵⁵ A review from 1829 again remarks upon the difficulty of her repertoire and notes that in addition to works by Hummel, Kalkbrenner, Herz and Pixis, she performed her own 'just as difficult as artfully composed variations' ('eben so schwierig, als kunstvoll componierte eigne Variationen').⁵⁶

Davies, ed, *Clara Schumann Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Alexander Stefaniak, *Becoming Clara Schumann: Performance Strategies and Aesthetics in the Culture of the Musical Canon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2021); Stephen Rodgers, *The Songs of Clara Schumann* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

⁵³ On the understanding of women musicians as reproductive artists, see, for example, Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 45–54; Beth Abelson Macleod, *Women Performing Music: The Emergence of American Women as Classical Instrumentalists and Conductors* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2001), 23, 92–3.

⁵⁴ In the novel, Corinne is described as an exceptional interpreter of tragedy and performs in a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance. Staël, *Corinne*, 22, 121–8.

⁵⁵ 'Report of Music', *The London Magazine* 8 (August 1823): 208.

⁵⁶ 'Correspondenz: Neuberg an der Donau', *Flora: Ein Unterhaltungs-Blatt* no. 101 (21 May 1829): 413.

The compositions mentioned in these early reviews have not survived. As only snippets of Schauroth's papers have been preserved, it is difficult to know how much she composed, but sources indicate that she published at least three works: the *Sonate brillante* (1834), a Caprice in B flat minor (1836) and *Sechs Lieder ohne Worte*, Op. 18 (1870).⁵⁷ The opus number of the latter collection suggests that she composed quite a few other works prior to 1870. In addition, there are a number of musical autograph album pieces that have been preserved.⁵⁸

Since Schauroth was not a prolific composer, her reception requires some context. When she published the *Sonate brillante* in 1834, Schauroth joined the small handful of women who had published a piano sonata in the early nineteenth century, an act that must have signalled her serious ambitions as a composer and that flouted gendered expectations to compose in small-scale genres, such as the character piece or *Lied*.⁵⁹ After the publication of her *Sonate brillante* (1834) and Caprice (1836), which received favourable reviews, her status as a composer-performer was reinforced and seems to have flourished even years after these publications.⁶⁰ A review of a Berlin appearance in 1863, for instance, mentions these pieces in an account of her artistic credentials and calls both of them 'rich and full of feeling' ('gehaltvoll und empfunden').⁶¹ Although it is unclear which of her compositions she performed at a concert in Heidelberg in 1861, the review of this event notes that 'as a result of sustained storms of applause, she delighted us with another piece of her own composition, which not only attested to the extraordinary pianist, but also to her extremely outstanding talent for composition' ('in Folge anhaltenden Beifallssturms erfreute sie uns mit noch einem Stücke eigener Komposition, welches nicht allein die außerordentlicher Pianistin, sondern auch deren höchst

⁵⁷ Of these, the Caprice cannot be found at present.

⁵⁸ I am aware of album-leaf manuscripts by Schauroth in the albums of Ferdinand Hiller, Josephine Lang, Felix Mendelssohn and Clara and Robert Schumann. While several encyclopaedia articles mention additional pieces, no details about these works can be found in Schauroth's critical reception or in archival collections. Linda Maria Koldau mentions a Sonata in A minor that was composed around 1835, but provides no further details. Linda Maria Koldau 'Schauroth, Delphine von', *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart Online*, accessed 6 April 2021. In addition to that sonata, Schwarz-Danuser notes that a Sonata in E flat Major that could not be located. Schwarz-Danuser, 'Schauroth, Delphine von', 396. It is likely that the Sonata in E flat Major is the *Sonate brillante*: some critics refer to it as such since the final movement is in that key.

⁵⁹ Information on minor women composers is often lacking, but I have only been able to identify a small number of women who published piano sonatas between 1800 and 1834: Marie Bigot, Margarethe Danzi, Katerina Veronika Anna Dusíkova, Helene Liebmann, Hélène-Antoinette-Marie de Nervo de Montgeroult, Maria Hester Park, Maria Frances Park and Julie Baroni-Cavalcabó (von Webenau). Other women publishing compositions in large-scale forms (aside from the piano sonata) in this period include Leopoldine Blahetka, Louise Farrenc, Katerina Maier and Maria Theresia von Paradis. Regarding the German women composers most well-known today, in 1834 Fanny Hensel had not yet published any works (under her own name) and Clara Wieck had published only her Op.1 through Op.6, which consist of character pieces and dance genres. Her first large-scale work, the Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 7, was performed in 1835 and published in 1836. The gendered implications of genres are discussed later in this article.

⁶⁰ As Dorothea Hofmann points out, critics reviewing her performances in the years immediately after the publication of these works (1837–1841) do not mention her compositions. However, in her later years her status as a composer is more consistently recalled; Hofmann, 'Tag und Nacht', 73.

⁶¹ 'Berlin', *Signale für die Musikalische Welt* 28, no. 16 (19 March 1863): 251

hervorragendes Talent zur Komposition bekundete').⁶² Even in her final years of performance, when her reception as a pianist was more mixed, her compositional work was met with admiration, as in an 1870 review in the *Signale für die musikalische Welt* that notes the charming quality of some of her *Lieder ohne Worte*.⁶³ Attesting to her standing, the *Berliner Tonkünstlerverein* included her work in its concert series in the 1868–69 season.⁶⁴ In 1870 she was made a member of the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein* for her work as a composer.⁶⁵

As her work within the genre of the *Lied ohne Worte* might suggest, compositional exchange was integral to Schauroth's earlier connection with Felix Mendelssohn. Schauroth and Mendelssohn wrote *Lieder ohne Worte* for each other in the early 1830s, and while Mendelssohn's was incorporated into his first published collection in that genre, Schauroth's tarried in its ephemeral status as a musical album-leaf composition, and it was only in 1870 that her Op. 18, a collection of six *Lieder ohne Worte*, released it into the public.⁶⁶ In addition, Mendelssohn's dedication of the Piano Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25 to Schauroth may have acknowledged her involvement in the work, beyond her inspiring skills as a pianist: a letter to his family written on 6 October 1831 notes that she contributed a passage to the work that he characterized as 'ring[ing] out powerfully'.⁶⁷ Indeed, years later, a critic for *Berlinische Nachrichten* reported that Mendelssohn used to jokingly referred to Schauroth as 'my favourite fabricator of passagework' ('mein lieb Passaginfabrikantin'), alluding to her facility for creating spectacularly virtuosic piano passages.⁶⁸

While Schauroth's strong reputation as a performer-creator is evident in the reception of her compositions and their role in her musical relationships, responses

⁶² 'Kunst und Wissenschaft', *Badesche Landeszeitung* (23 February 1861), 237. A review from 1862 also mentions Schauroth performing some of her own short works to conclude the concert, suggesting that she may have routinely featured her compositions as finales or encores at this point in her career. 'Wissenschaftliche und Kunst-Nachrichten', *Berlinische Nachrichten von Staats- und gelehrten Sachen* (2 December 1862), n.p.

⁶³ 'Dur und Moll', *Signale für die musikalische Welt* 28, no. 10 (10 February 1870): 149.

⁶⁴ 'Feuilleton', *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* 1, no. 2 (7 January 1870): 30. Schauroth is listed among the composers featured, but no details are provided about the specific compositions.

⁶⁵ 'Bekanntmachung des Allgemeinen Deutschen Musikvereins', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 66, no. 8 (18 February 1870): 80.

⁶⁶ Mendelssohn mentions Schauroth's composition in a letter to his family. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to Lea Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Munich, 23 July 1830, in Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Sämtliche Briefe II*, 52. Todd suggests that Schauroth's *Lied ohne Worte* in E major may have been a response to Mendelssohn's *Rondo capriccioso*, Op. 14 and speculates about Mendelssohn's returned musical missive in his Op. 19b, no. 6. Todd, *Mendelssohn*, 229–30, 234. As Annegret Huber notes, this exchange means that Schauroth would have worked in the genre of the *Lied ohne Worte* before Mendelssohn published his first collection. Huber, *Das 'Lied ohne Worte' als kunstübergreifendes Experiment*, 299. For more on nineteenth-century album leaf collections in general, including Felix Mendelssohn's, see Oliver Huck, 'Albumblätter für Klavier – Manuskripte und Kompositionen im 19. Jahrhundert', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 75 (2018): 244–77.

⁶⁷ Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy to Abraham Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Munich, October 6, 1831, in Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Sämtliche Briefe II*, 404. Todd suggests that this may have been one of the first movement's 'noisy octave or arpeggiation passages'. Todd, *Mendelssohn*, 249.

⁶⁸ 'Wissenschaftliche und Kunst-Nachrichten', *Berlinische Nachrichten* (2 December 1862), n.p.

to her pianism, too, ardently depict her as a creative artist. Particularly in her first period of maturity, in the late 1820s and early 1830s, critics responded to her playing by invoking images of creation and magic. While the reception of Schuaroth's pianism as magical doubtlessly reflects the tendency of early nineteenth-century music criticism toward fantastic imagery, I am primarily interested in how critics use magic to suggest Schuaroth's creative powers.⁶⁹ As suggested earlier, figures such as the sorceress Armida were invoked as icons of original genius, rendering magic a particularly fitting image of creation by a woman artist.

Critics also emphasized that Schuaroth manifested her own spirit in performance, an equally significant aspect of her representation as a creative artist. Prior to the backlash against virtuoso pianism and the dominance of the *Werktreue* ideal, critics did not necessarily desire to hear a transparent performance of a work.⁷⁰ Indeed, Mary Hunter has shown that, beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing into the early nineteenth, the aesthetic discourse on performance regarded the interpretive performer 'as a fully fledged artist on a par with the composer'.⁷¹ Within this early romantic ideal of performance, while the artist is expected to reproduce the composer's work, they are also asked to *re-create* it compellingly by 'developing and displaying a unitary consciousness that merged [their] own subjectivity with the composer's'.⁷²

Alexander Stefaniak has examined how the reception of Clara Schumann as a pianist reflects this ideal, and how critics present Schumann as having achieved an exceptional revelatory power, bringing forth the work's essence or the spirit of the composer through her 'understanding, sensitivity, memory, and conscious devotion'.⁷³ In some cases, commentators go so far as to imagine approving apparitions of eminent composers.⁷⁴ The contrast in the reception of Schuaroth is striking, though one must recall that the height of her prominence precedes Stefaniak's focal point of the 1840s and beyond.⁷⁵ Never is there an emphasis on the composer, the work, or devotion leading to revelation; instead, there is Schuaroth herself, her

⁶⁹ Miranda Stanyon remarks on 'the new twilight zone between literature and music theory or criticism' in Romantic writing. Stanyon, 'Music and Romantic Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to Music and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 37. On music and the fantastic in the nineteenth century, see also Francesca Brittan, *Music and Fantasy in the Age of Berlioz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁷⁰ For more on the *Werktreue* ideal in relation to performance in the nineteenth century, see Angelika App, 'Die "Werktreue" bei Clara Schumann', in *Clara Schumann – Komponistin, Interpretin, Unternehmerin, Ikone*, ed. Peter Ackermann and Herbert Schneider (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1999), 9–18; Lydia Goehr, 'After 1800: The Beethoven Paradigm', in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 205–42, especially 231–2; Karen Leistra-Jones, 'Staging Authenticity: Joachim, Brahms, and the Politics of *Werktreue* Performance', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 66 (2013): 207–36; Alexander Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity: Criticism, Composition, and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016), 156–7, 195–238.

⁷¹ Hunter, "'To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer'", 361.

⁷² Hunter, "'To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer'", 370, 384.

⁷³ Alexander Stefaniak, 'Clara Schumann and the Imagined Revelation of Musical Works', *Music & Letters* 99/2 (2018): 195.

⁷⁴ Stefaniak, 'Clara Schumann and the Imagined Revelation of Musical Works', 200.

⁷⁵ My work on the reception of Clara Wieck in the 1830s contrasts significantly with Stefaniak's findings. Amanda Lalonde, 'The Young Prophetess in Performance', in *Clara Schumann Studies*, ed. by Joe Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 187–201.

genius in performance, her creative power.⁷⁶ While much of the reception of Schauroth is in line with the ideal that Hunter presents, with Schauroth depicted as penetrating deeply into the spirit of the composition, some fervent responses to Schauroth as a performer in the late 1820s and early 1830s accentuate her performance of her own interiority and her perceived remaking of the work to such an extent that the composer is somewhat effaced (or, occasionally, not even mentioned).⁷⁷ In some examples, this reception could be regarded as occupying the extreme end of the early Romantic ideal, but in others, Schauroth's perceived creative role seems to surpass the limits of this co-creative model, in which hearing the presence of the composer is crucial.

One such instance of a critic imagining Schauroth's performance as an act of creation appears in an 1833 issue of *Der Bazar für München und Bayern*. Likely written by noted wit Moritz Gottlieb Saphir, editor of this journal, the review responds to a concert featuring Hummel's Piano Concerto in A minor:

Her playing conjures this concerto, even for those who have already heard it, into one entirely new, never heard before; so her genius breathes into it a characteristic charm, a new magic. The infinite virtuosity of her skill arouses admiration, and the soulful interiority [*Innigkeit*] and tender elegance of her performance can be compared with nothing but the highly beguiling charm and the idyllically graceful character of the artist herself.⁷⁸

Here, the critic admires that which is ephemeral and created through performance as a reflection of Schauroth herself, instead of seeking an enduring essence of the work. Rather than foregrounding the concerto or the composer, the critic emphasizes how Schauroth's genius penetrates the work, enlivening it, and how her own personality, perfectly displayed in her performance, comprises the substance of what is conveyed to the audience. The critic underscores the transformative power of her pianism, which, for him, essentially creates a new work from the raw material of Hummel's concerto. As Hunter explains, some early nineteenth-century thinkers such as Hegel assert that musicians of genius and virtuosity seem to create the work 'anew' in performance, but the vehemence of the critic's

⁷⁶ As Stefaniak acknowledges, Schumann's reception is fascinating from a gendered perspective, in that critics needed to reckon with how a woman could authentically reveal the spirits of male composers and the essences of their works. That Schauroth represents a vastly different approach to performance, and yet was also highly admired, is significant for our understanding of the gendered reception of female virtuoso pianists in the nineteenth century. Stefaniak, 'Clara Schumann and the Imagined Revelation', 196, 198–9. Schauroth might thus provide a counterexample to Cvejić's assertion, in an examination of Marie Pleyel and Clara Schumann, that 'only male virtuosos were seen as "literal embodiment[s] of extreme virtuosity" because, to put it simply ... individuality and subjectivity themselves were gendered male'; Cvejić, *The Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity*, 222.

⁷⁷ 'Reclamation', *Allgemeine Zeitung* 44, no. 67 (8 March 1841): 534; 'Feuilleton', *Fränkischer Merkur* no. 75 (16 March 1841): n.p.

⁷⁸ 'Ihr Spiel zaubert dieses Concert selbst für den, der es schon hörte, zu einem ganz neuen, noch nie gehörten um; so haucht ihr Genius demselben einen eigenthümlichen Reiz, einen neuen Zauber ein. Die unendliche Virtuosität ihrer Fertigkeit erregt Bewunderung, und die Seelenvolle Innigkeit und zarte Eleganz ihres Vortrages ist mit nichts zu vergleichen als mit dem hohen Liebreiz und der idyllisch anmuthigen Persönlichkeit der Künstlerin selbst'. 'Philharmonischer Verein', *Der Bazar für München und Bayern: Ein Frühstücks-Blatt für Jedermann und jede Frau* no. 219 (18 September 1833): 878.

claim that Schuaroith creates a work that is 'entirely new, never heard before' is striking and unexpected even within this context.⁷⁹

Just as the previous review spoke of the 'new magic' that Schuaroith's genius imparted upon the concerto, so too does a response to her performance of Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto, Op. 73, depict her pianism as an act of enchantment:

I believe that the philosopher who asserted that the soul resides in the fingertips was either a money changer or he heard Miss von Schuaroith play the piano! I speak not at all of the tremendous, almost incomprehensible skill, but only about the characteristic charm of the tenderness and interiority [*Innigkeit*] with which she knows how to give rise to the deepest, most secret spirits of the enchanted strings, so that they speak to her and unfold their secretly prevailing powers. As I was leaving, someone was so simple-minded as to ask me: 'How did you like Schuaroith?' He could just as well have asked: 'How did you like the dawn?'

I merely said: I just saw with my own ears the Graces dance the Iliad on the piano!⁸⁰

Perhaps due to the colossal standing of Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto, this review makes some acknowledgement of the performed work, most notably through the reverent association with the *Iliad*, but also in that, here, Schuaroith's act of summoning is met by spirits that emerge from the strings, suggesting that she is drawing something enduring out of the piano rather than only suffusing the work with her own genius. Even in the performance of so august a work, though, there remains a marked impression that she is contributing to its creation and transmitting her own presence. Indeed, the question posed to the reviewer – 'How did you like Schuaroith?' – speaks to her command as a performer. This entwining of her own artistry and personality with the work is further emphasized in the critic's overwhelmed comment that he 'just saw the Graces dance the Iliad on the piano with [his] own ears!' Here, the great masculine epic is transformed, remade, such that the critic must invoke the feminine dance of the Graces to encompass his experience of the performance through a multi-sensory image of co-creation.

Addressing Schuaroith's creative powers more pianistically, the remark about the soul residing in the fingertips that begins the review might suggest that her performance was understood as having an improvisatory spirit. In George Sand's *Consuelo* (1842), the title character, an opera singer (herself based on Corinne), enjoins a student to 'try to improvise something, whether with the violin or the voice. It is thus that the soul manifests itself at the tip of the lips or the fingers'.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Hunter, "'To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer'", 362–3.

⁸⁰ 'Ich glaube, derjenige Philosoph, welcher behauptete, die Seele wohne in den Fingerspitzen, der war entweder ein Geldwechsler, oder er hat Fräulein von Schuaroith Klavier spielen gehört! Ich spreche gar nicht von der ungeheuern, fast unbegreiflichen Fertigkeit, sondern blos von dem eigenen Reiz der Zartheit und Innigkeit, mit dem sie die tiefsten, geheimsten Geister der bezauberten Saiten heraufzubeschwören weiß, daß sie ihr Rede stehen und ihre geheimwaltenden Mächte entfalten. Als ich hinaus gieng, war jemand so einfältig, mich zu fragen: "Wie hat Ihnen die Schuaroith gefallen?" Er hätte eben so gut fragen können: "Wie hat Ihnen das Morgenroth geschmeckt?"

Ich sagte blos: ich habe so eben mit eigenen Ohren die Grazien auf dem Klavier die Iliade tanzen gesehen! 'Die Sonntags-Mittagsstunde am 20sten Mai', *Der deutsche Horizont: Ein humoristisches Blatt für Zeit, Geist, und Sitte* 2, no. 82 (22 May 1832): col. 656.

⁸¹ George Sand, *Consuelo*, trans. Fayette Robinson (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson, 1870), 331. Esterhammer, *Romanticism and Improvisation*, 187.

This passage suggests that the expression is linked with the improvisatory and, furthermore, that improvisation involves transmitting one's soul. Indeed, the review continues to develop that imagery with the impression that Schauroth is playing directly on the strings, such that her own soul flows with immediacy from fingers to strings and wakens the secret spirits of the piano and the work. At issue here is not whether Schauroth was actually improvising, but rather that critics heard her performance as though it was created in the moment, a manifestation of her soul.⁸²

The emphasis on Schauroth's artistic vision is even more pronounced in a review in *Aurora, Zeitschrift aus Bayern* from 1829. After proclaiming that Schauroth brought the audience 'to rapture and enthusiasm through her own art-magic', the critic develops an image of Schauroth that accentuates her creative powers and the immediacy of her performance:

While through the whole performance a rare understanding, a highly inspired conception of the composition speaks, there is dispersed just as much over the whole the wonderful charm of deepest feeling, while the more powerful and marked passages are distinguished through a masterfully precise and characteristic performance. In many passages the delicate fingers seem only to float lightly over the keys and the fleetingly struck tone rises silver like the song of an Aeolian harp from the strings. To speak of mechanical skill in this artist would be a sin, for just as the dreamer [*Phantaste*], bound to no mechanical obstacle, builds her flower kingdoms and magic, so too is it when this artist plays, not only as if she played, but also, if she only wished it, that immediately streams of tones would pour – in one way or another – out of the strings; one hears the master [*Meisterin*] and forgets meanwhile to see that she is there, although one does not lose here either.⁸³

Although the review concludes with a reference to her attractiveness, an evaluative component that was nearly inescapable for women pianists in the nineteenth century, the critic speaks of Schauroth in near-authorial terms throughout.⁸⁴ The work and composer are unstated and, indeed, it is Schauroth's 'inspired conception' of the piece that is emphasized, with accounts of her 'own art-magic' affecting the

⁸² Although Schauroth was an acclaimed 'Passagenfabrikantin', it is not known whether she actually improvised during these performances. Both Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto and Hummel's Concerto in A minor provide cadenzas for the pianist. Hunter's conception of early romantic performance aesthetics encompasses 'the ideal of a performance that is clearly not, but seems to be, created on the spot'. Hunter, "'To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer'", 393.

⁸³ 'während sich durch das ganze Spiel eine seltene Verständigkeit, eine höchst geniale Auffassung der Komposition ausspricht, ist über das Ganze eben so sehr der wunderbare Reiz des tiefsten Gefühles verbreitet, als die kräftigeren und marquirten Stellen sich durch einen meisterhaft präzisen und charakteristischen Vortrag auszeichnen. In manchen Stellen scheinen die zarten Finger nur mehr leise über den Tasten zu schweben, und der kurz angeschlagene Ton weht wie Aeolsharfenlied silbern aus den Saiten auf. Von mechanischer Fertigkeit bei dieser Künstlerin zu sprechen, wäre Sünde, denn wie die Phantaste, an kein mechanisches Hinderniß gebunden, sich ihre Blumenreiche und Zauber aufbaut, eben so ist's, wenn diese Künstlerin spielt, nicht, als wenn sie spielte, sondern, als wenn sie nur wollte, daß sich jetzt Ströme von Tönen in dieser oder jenen Weise aus den Saiten ergießen; man hört die Meisterin und vergißt darüber, zu sehen, daß sie da ist, obwohl man auch hier nicht verlore'. 'Konzert', *Aurora, Zeitschrift aus Bayern* no. 34 (22 April 1829): 140.

⁸⁴ On the reception of female pianists, including their appearance, see Katharine Ellis, 'Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50 (1997): 353–85, esp. 374–5.

audience and analogies to the building of dream-kingdoms. This foregrounding of the pianist as creator culminates in an astonishing reference to Schauroth as 'the master' [*Meisterin*']. As Mary Hunter notes, early-Romantic 'admonitions to follow the intentions of the composer' sometimes included figuring him as 'The Master'.⁸⁵ In this context, to apply the title to a performer – and to feminize it – seems doubly astounding.

The critic also emphasizes the inwardness and immediacy of Schauroth's performance style, invoking feeling, dreams and that eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century staple, the Aeolian harp.⁸⁶ In the review, the critic imagines Schauroth bypassing the tactile keys of the piano in favour of spontaneous song emerging directly from the strings. This paints an image of the direct and improvisatory spirit of her pianism and further suggests, by momentarily turning the piano into a harp, a link to Corinne and the tradition of the poetic improvisor. Indeed, the comparison of Schauroth to the '*Phantaste*' suggests a further link to the improvisatory through *phantasieren*.

Although Schauroth largely performed works by other composers, both her contemporaneous reputation as a composer and her reception as a pianist support that she was understood as a creative artist. While she published little, the ambitious and expressive nature of her works made enough of a mark that she was recognized as a composer throughout her career. The reception of Schauroth as a performer, especially in the 1820s and 30s, also depicts her as a creative force through allusions to magical creation, references to her ability to transform a work in performance (or to fashion a seemingly new one), little emphasis on or outright omission of the composer and an understanding of the performed work as an expression of her own spirit.

Corinna-Sister: Schauroth, Improvisation and the Improvisatory

While some of the above reviews of Schauroth's performances suggest that her pianism was understood by critics as having an improvisatory spirit – through allusions to improvisation, depictions of the immediacy of her performances and references to dreams, inspired states and the Aeolian harp – they do not necessarily attest to the inclusion of actual improvised musical content. However, other sources unequivocally bear witness to Schauroth improvising at the piano, the artistic practice that connects her most explicitly with Corinne the *improvisatrice*. In this section, I first discuss Schauroth's practice of improvisation in relation to that of Corinne. I suggest that the array of settings, materials and scopes evident in the performances of the *improvisatrice* can provide a varied and inclusive model of improvisation that elucidates how Schauroth could have been understood by contemporaries as an improvisor. However, Corinne's improvisations provide no such analogue for Schauroth's compositions. With regard to her compositional work, the second focal point of this section, Corinne is invoked more loosely by Robert Schumann to suggest Schauroth's creative prowess and improvisatory style. I show how multiple reviews of Schauroth's musical works frame

⁸⁵ Hunter, "'To Play as if from the Soul of the Composer'", 359.

⁸⁶ Corinne likens the human imagination to the Aeolian harp; Staël, *Corinne*, 45. On the Aeolian harp see, for example, Susan Bernstein, 'On Music Framed: The Eolian Harp in Romantic Writing', in *The Figure of Music in Nineteenth-Century British Poetry*, ed. Phyllis Weliver (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 70–84.

her style in relation to the improvisatory and use the critics' observations as a point of entry for my own examination of Schauroth's compositions.

Musical improvisation became an increasingly marked practice as the nineteenth century progressed; it was doubly so when performed by a woman. Writing of the eighteenth-century discourse on the fantasia genre, Annette Richards remarks that it 'tends to be gender-specific – the fantasia is considered the music of genius, and as such it is generally the domain of men, both as performers and as listeners'.⁸⁷ Kordula Knaus notes that in Vienna around the year 1800 women pianists performed their own compositions, but the improvised free fantasia was overwhelmingly the realm of male virtuosos.⁸⁸ By the early nineteenth century, not much had changed: the young Clara Wieck was considered exceptional for her ability to improvise.⁸⁹ If early nineteenth-century musical culture was still grappling with the ability of women to compose, then improvisation, an act that shone a spotlight on the act of in-the-moment authorship, would naturally have been arresting. In this context, a woman pianist who improvised – even to a limited extent – would have been noteworthy.

What constitutes improvisation, if Corinne is invoked as a model? Corinne's most discussed improvisations are her three original, extended, public poems (her 'Last Song' and the performances at the Capitol and Miseno), which Staël uses to punctuate dramatic moments in the narrative and includes, transformed into prose, in the text. Indeed, it is these performances that most inspired real-life imitators of Corinne. However, throughout the novel Corinne's improvisations and her reflections on this practice encompass a range of improvisatory acts, even extending to include music and dance.⁹⁰ For instance, if Corinne's activity as a *musical* improviser is considered, then during her extended poetic improvisation at Miseno she engages in preluding and interluding on her lyre, a practice that translates well to the short improvised passages early nineteenth-century pianists sometimes created to introduce or connect works.⁹¹ Earlier in the novel, Corinne reflects on her practice of improvisation at a small gathering, presenting it as a 'lively conversation' inspired by the interests of friends. On this occasion, she frames improvisation as a pursuit that is neither necessarily purely individual, nor public, but rather one that is potentially collaborative and domestic or semi-public.⁹² Furthermore, in conversation with Lord Nelvil, Corinne elucidates the

⁸⁷ Annette Richards, 'C.P.E. Bach's Free Fantasy and the Performance of the Imagination', in *Acting on the Past: Historical Performance Across the Disciplines*, ed. Annette Richards and Mark Franko (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 133n11.

⁸⁸ Kordula Knaus, 'Fantasie, Virtuosität und die Performanz musikalischer Inspiration: Pianistinnen und Pianisten in Wien um 1800', in *Anklaenge: Wiener Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* (2013): 57–73.

⁸⁹ Valerie Goertzen, 'Setting the Stage: Clara Schumann's Preludes', in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettle and Melinda Russell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 240.

⁹⁰ For the importance of music, among other arts, to Corinne's improvisatory practice see Simone Balayé, 'Plotting with Music and Sound in *Corinne*', in *The Novel's Seductions: Staël's Corinne in Critical Inquiry*, ed. Karyna Szmurlo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1999): 69–83; Tili Boon, 'Women Performing Music: Staging a Social Protest', *Women in French Studies* 8 (2000): 48–50; Lockhart, *Animation, Plasticity, and Music in Italy*, 95.

⁹¹ Staël, *Corinne*, 236. On the practice of piano preluding, see Valerie Woodring Goertzen, 'By Way of Introduction: Preluding by 18th- and Early 19th-Century Pianists', *The Journal of Musicology* 14 (1996): 299–337.

⁹² Staël, *Corinne*, 45–6.

diverse materials of her improvisations, explaining that she sometimes generates them from the inspired interweaving of quotations, her own thoughts and the music of her lyre.⁹³

This varied understanding of improvisation – beyond an extended, individual, public performance – allows it to hold its integral looseness, to be something ephemeral and shape-shifting. Furthermore, these multiple facets to Corinne's improvisation are particularly relevant for women's improvisatory practice at the piano in the nineteenth century. It would seem that few nineteenth-century women pianists are known to have consistently engaged in extensive improvisations in public settings.⁹⁴ It is possible, then, that holding these characteristics of publicness and substantial length as the epitome of improvisation could further emphasize its masculinity. However, if Corinne's varied practice of improvisation is taken as a model, then we can better understand how women such as Schueroth held reputations as improvisatory artists. After all, Corinne was not only the embodiment of romantic spontaneous authorship, but also represented a concerted attempt by Madame de Staël to create a feminine artistic genius.⁹⁵

As a student of Kalkbrenner, Schueroth presumably would have received training in improvisation: he was an advocate for its necessity and wrote a treatise on the subject.⁹⁶ Although there is not an extensive record of Schueroth in letters or diaries, in the few extant sources that speak to her private life, there is some suggestion that she practised improvisation in domestic settings. When Fanny Hensel was travelling through Munich in 1839 to embark on her sojourn in Italy, she met Schueroth and described her first impressions in a letter to Felix Mendelssohn: 'I also want to tell you that I met Delphine Handley, and with great pleasure. She is an enchanting person and a splendid talent. Aside from you, I've never heard anyone play your first Concerto so well. ... What especially pleased me about her playing is her elegant preluding, which one finds so seldom in women.'⁹⁷ In this letter, Hensel refers to the practice of preluding, which either denotes improvising an introduction for an existing composition or creating a free-standing improvisation in the spirit of a prelude.⁹⁸ Whichever practice Hensel refers to here, she makes it evident that Schueroth distinguishes herself through these abilities.

Schueroth's improvisation is also noted in three markedly different reviews of one of her final public concerts, a full recital of solo piano works in honour of the late Mendelssohn at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig in 1870. Two critics point to

⁹³ Staël, *Corinne*, 46.

⁹⁴ Dana Gooley's study of piano improvisation, or 'free playing', in the nineteenth century focuses on 'forms of improvisation that were considerably more free, extensive, and elaborate than improvised preludes, embellishments, introductions, and shorter cadenzas', and as a consequence few women appear in the book. Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 7. On the other hand, as Marcia Citron notes, formal reception provides only a partial view of historical practices, which is especially true with regards to the reception of women artists. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 189.

⁹⁵ See, for instance, Esterhammer, *Romanticism and Improvisation*, 78, 84–5; Martin, *Germaine de Staël in Germany*, 130.

⁹⁶ Dana Gooley, 'Saving Improvisation: Hummel and the Free Fantasia in the Early Nineteenth Century', in *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies*, vol. 2, ed. George Lewis and Benjamin Piekut (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 187–8.

⁹⁷ Fanny und Felix Mendelssohn, *Briefwechsel 1821 bis 1846*, S. 317, 19. September 1839.

⁹⁸ Goertzen, 'By Way of Introduction', 303.

her highly 'mannered' style of performance, which may have been an indication of changing tastes or of deteriorating abilities.⁹⁹ However, the reviews diverge significantly in their understanding of her incorporation of improvisation. In *Europa-Chronik*, her improvisatory practice is met with bewilderment and derision:

Her playing ... showed ... only the wreckage of former magnificence, in which one is still aware of skill, but no longer of any correctness, and then the performance was hyper-mannered in a way which really must be called dreadful. And yet still the way in which she leaped about the supposed things – from Mendelssohn, Chopin, Bach, etc.! We hardly could have dreamed of such a corruption through omissions, additions, changes, framing [*Verbrämen*], and so on. A dilettante who plays by ear could hardly do worse.¹⁰⁰

The critic takes a strong stance on her pianism by decrying her 'corruption' of the works, but also, in his outrage, provides a fairly detailed account of her practice of improvisation. The description of Schauroth 'leaping about' between the selected works and making omissions, additions, changes and adding decorative material or framing indicates that the recital included a significant amount of improvised material, and that Schauroth found opportunities to improvise – beyond the practice of prelude – to the extent that the critic objected to her trespassing on the inviolability of the musical works. From these comments, we can understand that Schauroth took a pronounced improvisatory approach in the recital, even if the result was heretical in the eyes of some critics.

Two other reviewers comment more favourably on the same concert. According to the critic for the *Signale für die musikalische Welt*:

That she must have been an eminent artist at the time when she inspired the young Mendelssohn to write one of his best compositions was still recognizable even now, when her playing could only recall her earlier greatness and seemed clouded by many mannerisms and distortions. In particular, her own compositions, as well as her sustained additions in the character of an improvisation to two compositions by Chopin, were especially charming to us.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Hofmann rightly suggests that, in the nearly 50 years that had passed since the start of Schauroth's performing career, the ideals of piano performance certainly had changed; Hofmann, 'Tag und Nacht', 75.

¹⁰⁰ 'ihr Spiel ... zeigte ... nur noch die Trümmer ehemaliger Herrlichkeit, indem man wohl noch Fertigkeit, aber keine Correctheit mehr gewahrte, und dann war der Vortrag auf eine Weise hypermanierirt, die geradezu entsetzlich genannt werden muß. Und nun noch die Art und Weise, in welcher sie mit den unterstellten Sachen – von Mendelssohn, Chopin, Bach zc. – umsprang! Eine solche Verballhornung durch Weglassen, Zusetzen, Verändern, Verbrämen u.s.w. hätten wir uns kaum träumen lassen. Ein Dilettant, der nach dem Gehöre spielt, konnte es kaum schlimmer machen'. 'Musik', *Europa-Chronik: Wochenchronik*, no. 7 (1870): 105.

¹⁰¹ 'Daß sie zu jener Zeit, als sie den Jüngling Mendelssohn zu einer seiner besten Compositionen inspirirte, eine eminente Künstlerin gewesen sein müsse, war selbst jetzt noch erkennbar, wo ihr Spiel, nur mehr an seine frühere Größe zu erinnern vermochte und durch vieles Manierirte und Verzerrte getrübt erschien. Namentlich waren ihre eigenen Compositionen, sowie ihre im Character der Improvisation gehaltenen Zuthaten zu zwei Compositionen von Chopin für uns von besonderem Reiz'; 'Dur und Moll' (10 February 1870): 149

It is not clear whether the 'mannerisms and distortions' here refer to her playing style in general (such as conspicuous use of tempo and dynamic fluctuations), or whether they might also encompass some of the improvisatory practice that struck the other reviewer as so offensive to good taste. However, this reviewer reacts approvingly to the 'charming' and 'sustained' improvisations that Schauroth incorporated into her performance of short works by Chopin.

Finally, a critic for *Die Tonhalle* further corroborates that Schauroth's improvised material was quite extensive: 'the fantasy with which she had to fill in the intervals between the individual pieces testified to a rich education and a deep wealth of ideas' ('die Phantasie, womit sie die Intervallen zwischen den einzelnen Piecen ausfüllen mußte, zeugten von reicher Bildung und einem tiefen Ideenschatze').¹⁰² Far from suggesting that Schauroth was flailing haphazardly at the keys due to her deteriorating abilities, like the critic in *Europa-Chronik*, this reviewer recognizes her performance as falling within the tradition of *phantasieren* and lauds her skill and inventiveness.

It is possible that these late reviews capture an aspect of Schauroth's earlier public performance practice that was not explicitly commented upon at the time. If an improvisatory relationship to musical works through preludes, interludes, transitional material, and insertions was more acceptable or even commendable in the first half of the nineteenth century, critics might not have found the need to describe, or even mention, an established practice. It may be (though it is impossible to know) that the reviews encountered earlier in this article, which responded so rapturously to her pronounced presence as an artist by summoning up images of creation and magic, were reacting, in part, to her fluency with improvisatory practices such as these. Yet, even from the unambiguous accounts of improvisation from Fanny Hensel and these late reviews, it is evident that, like Corinne's practice, Schauroth's included both public and private performances, and encompassed varied approaches to improvisation.

The responses of critics to Schauroth's work as a composer mirror the reception of her performances: virtuosic, deeply expressive and improvisatory. In examining the reviews of Schauroth's compositions in this section, I focus particularly on critics' evocations of the improvisatory. This is not to say that Schauroth's works were more improvisatory than those of some of her contemporaries, or that they even necessarily reflect her practice of improvisation (without contemporaneous written accounts on this subject, it is unwise to conjecture), but simply that critics consistently identified this characteristic as integral to her style. While some nineteenth-century reviews of compositions point unambiguously to specific passages, whether due to the inclusion of score examples or to detailed descriptions of musical moments, the shorter reviews of Schauroth's work, while evocative, tend to comment on the piece or movement as a whole. Since my aim in this article is not only to examine Schauroth's reception, but also, through this lens, her artistic character, I use some of the commentary in the reviews as an opening through which to examine Schauroth's compositions further, while being careful not to confuse my observations with those of the critic.

¹⁰² 'Leipziger Musikbericht', *Die Tonhalle* no. 8 (14 February 1870): 116.

A trace of Schauroth's Caprice (published, but not preserved)¹⁰³ remains in Robert Schumann's 1836 *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* review, in which it is considered amongst an assortment of contemporaneously released caprices and fantasies:

But it is bestowed on the children in dreams. The Caprice by Delphine Hill Handley, to many perhaps better known and more preferably under the name Schauroth, belongs with all its small weaknesses among the charming ones. The imperfections are those of inexperience, not of clumsiness; the true musical nerve feels everywhere. This time it is yet a very delicate, passionate rosy glow that makes this miniature picture interesting.¹⁰⁴

Schumann begins by addressing Schauroth's work in a fragmentary manner: his turn to her piece in the review ('But is it bestowed ...') is abruptly disconnected from the ideas in the previous section, perhaps reflecting the fleeting, ephemeral character of Schauroth's reviewed work.¹⁰⁵ In his review, we hear echoes of the prior reception of her performances through Schumann's allusions to luminosity and deep musical feeling, and to the improvisatory through the reference to dream states.¹⁰⁶

A different Caprice in F minor by Schauroth, preserved in the Schumanns's musical autograph album, might provide additional insight about her approach to the genre. Furthermore, her return to the caprice suggests that she felt some affinity for the spontaneous rhetoric of the genre, which was often compared to the free fantasia.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the album-leaf Caprice stays true to the spirit of the

¹⁰³ The Hofmeister catalogue confirms that the Caprice was published by Diabelli and provides the information that the piece is in B flat major. Adolph Hofmeister, ed, *C. F. Whistling's Handbuch der musikalischen Literatur oder allgemeines systematisch-geordnetes Verzeichnis der in Deutschland und in den angrenzenden Ländern gedruckten Musikalien auch musikalischen Schriften und Abbildungen mit Anzeige der Verleger und Preise. Dritte, bis zum Anfang des Jahres 1844 ergänzte Auflage*, vol. 2, (Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister, 1844), 168. I have not been able to locate a copy of this caprice.

¹⁰⁴ 'Den Kindern aber wird's im Traum bescheert. Die Caprice von Delphine Hill Handley, Manchen vielleicht unter dem Namen Schauroth bekannter und lieber, gehört mit allen ihren kleinen Schwächen zu den liebenswürdigen. Die Mängel sind welche der Ungeübtheit, nicht des Ungeschicks; der eigentliche musikalische Nerv fühlt sich überall an. Diesmal ist es noch eine sehr zarte leidenschaftliche Röthe, die dies Miniaturbild interessant macht'. Robert Schumann, 'Pianoforte. Phantasieen, Capricen', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 5, no. 33 (21 October 1836): 131–2.

¹⁰⁵ The preceding section is a fairly eviscerating review of a set of Nocturnes by Carl Kulenkamp.

¹⁰⁶ On music and dreaming in the nineteenth century and their relationship to the improvisatory and fragmentation, see Halina Goldberg, 'Chopin's Oneiric Soundscapes and the Role of Dreams in Romantic Culture', in *Chopin and his World*, ed. Jonathan Goldman and Halina Goldberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 15–43.

¹⁰⁷ While Christian Friedrich Michaelis held the caprice as synonymous with the seriousness and sublimity of the free fantasia, other nineteenth-century writers on music, such as Carl Czerny, viewed the caprice as lighter. Annette Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 134–5; Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation*, 76. Regarding a somewhat earlier comparison of the genres (though continuing into the nineteenth century), see Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 114–18 and Gretchen Wheelock, 'Mozart's Fantasy, Haydn's Caprice: What's in a Name', in *The Century of Bach and Mozart: Perspective on Historiography, Composition, Theory, and*

Ex. 1 Delphine von Schauroth, *Caprice in F minor*, bars 28–30

genre by showcasing evanescent musical ideas. The *Maestoso e lento* opening section, with its rolled chords suggestive of the improvisor's harp, sparse chordal support and free-flowing melody with occasional dotted rhythms gives way to a *con fuoco agitato* passage with the right hand primarily playing octaves over a halting and irregular semiquaver left hand part. The improvisatory character of Schauroth's style can be found, in particular, in the acceleration of this section into a short *a piacere* passage that temporarily abandons the time signature and invites the pianist to perform in a rhythmically free manner (Ex. 1). The fragmentary piece breaks off in the midst of a *moderato e languoroso* section, with an unexpected D major seventh chord as the final sonority. With multiple changes of character, figuration and tempo within its forty-bar span, the album-leaf provides a sense of Schauroth's improvisatory treatment of the caprice genre.

Schumann's response to the character of Schauroth's compositional work is made more explicit in his 1835 review of her *Sonate brillante*, mentioned at the beginning of this article for its reference to Corinne. In one section of this longer review, Schumann writes:

Nothing but the moment, the present sounds forth from it. No anxiety about what happened, no fear before that which may come. And even if there were nothing to it, one would have to commend the Corinna-sister for turning away from miniature painting to higher forms and wanting to create a life-sized picture. If only I could have been there as she wrote down the sonata! I would have attended to everything for her, false fifths, inharmonious cross-relations, crooked modulations, in short, everything; for it is music in its essence, the most feminine that one can imagine.¹⁰⁸

Performance, ed. Sean Gallagher and Thomas Forest Kelly (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 317–41.

¹⁰⁸ 'Lauter Augenblick, Gegenwart klingt heraus. Keine Angst um das, was geschehen, keine Furcht vor dem, was kommen könnte. Und wäre gar nichts daran, man müßte die Corinna-Schwester loben, daß sie sich von der Miniatur-Malerei weg zu höheren Formen wendet und ein Bild in Lebensgröße geben will. Hätte ich doch dabei sein können, wie sie

Although Schumann is patronizing in portions of the review, his description of Schauroth's music as 'the most feminine that one can imagine' moves away from the comments that immediately precede it and is better understood in relation to both the Corinne figure and his comment later in the review that Schauroth and Clara Wieck will be two Amazons among the Romantics.¹⁰⁹ In looking to *improvisatrice* and warriors as models of femininity, Schumann seems to comment on the unconventionality and robust physicality of the sonata.¹¹⁰ This is also suggested by the gendered genre associations that Schumann raises: by leaving aside the piano miniature and composing a sonata (invoked through their visual counterparts of 'miniature painting' and the historical or epic 'life-sized picture'), Schauroth makes an ambitious move that distinguishes her among contemporary women composers.¹¹¹ Indeed, as Matthew Head writes with regard to Fanny Hensel's 'Scottish' Sonata in G Minor (1843), 'The sonata was a liminal genre for women, at once a staple of performance, but not securely within a female compositional orbit'.¹¹²

When Schumann calls Schauroth a Corinna-sister, aligning her with that icon of feminine ephemeral authorship, he contextualizes this appellation by emphasizing the moment-by-moment quality of her music: 'Nothing but the moment, the present sounds forth from it'. As with the caprice genre, in this 'brilliant' sonata, Schauroth has selected a style conducive to capturing the spirit of improvisation.¹¹³ Although Schumann does not specify what creates this impression for him, another critic, writing for the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*, provides observations about the *Sonate brillante* that complement Schumann's statements. Read together, the responses of the two critics suggest

die Sonate niederschrieb! Alles hätte ich ihr nachgesehen, falsche Quinten, unharmonische Querstände, schiefe Modulationen, kurz Alles; denn es ist Musik in ihrem Wesen, die weiblichste, die man sich denken kann'; Schumann, 'Delphine Hill Handley, née de Schauroth, Sonate brillante', 125.

¹⁰⁹ 'ja sie wird sich zur Romantikerin hinaufbilden und so ständen mit Clara Wieck zwei Amazonen in den funkelnden Reihen'; Schumann, 'Delphine Hill Handley, née de Schauroth, Sonate brillante', 125.

¹¹⁰ As Ellen Lockhart notes, poetic 'improvisers were said to become flushed, sweat copiously, gesture extravagantly, [and] flash at the eyes...as they performed'. Lockhart, *Animation, Plasticity, and Music in Italy*, 96–7.

¹¹¹ Marcia Citron and Jeffrey Kallberg have examined analogies made between visual art and musical genres that are laden with gendered significance. Marcia Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 122–3, 127–8. Jeffrey Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 30–61. As William Weber notes, even in the 1840s, composition 'in the more highly valued genres' was often considered unfitting for women. William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 166. For additional context, see note 59 of this article.

¹¹² Matthew Head, 'Genre, Romanticism and Female Authorship: Fanny Hensel's "Scottish" Sonata in G Minor (1843)', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 4 (2007): 72. Given Schauroth's connection to Felix Mendelssohn and her acquaintance with Fanny Hensel, it is possible that Hensel would have been aware of Schauroth's sonata.

¹¹³ John Rink and Marco Targa both identify the nineteenth-century brilliant style with the improvisatory. John Rink, 'Chopin and Improvisation', in *Chopin and His World*, ed. Jonathan Goldman and Halina Goldberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 249; Marco Targa, 'Improvisation Practices in Beethoven's *Kleinere Stücke*', in *Musical Improvisation and Open Forms in the Age of Beethoven*, ed. Gianmario Borio and Angela Carone (London: Routledge, 2018), 182.

how the formal, harmonic, expressive and gestural features of the sonata contribute to its improvisatory character.

Schauroth's atypical approach to formal and harmonic structure is more explicitly noted by the reviewer in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*. Regarding the first movement in C minor, the reviewer observes that it is 'more a free fantasy than a regulated Allegro in the usual form' ('mehr eine freye Phantasie als ein geregeltes Allegro in gewöhnlicher Form'), invoking an improvisatory genre to convey Schauroth's departures from the strictures of sonata form.¹¹⁴ Rather than attacking Schauroth for diverging from formal conventions, though, the reviewer admits that Schauroth has other artistic goals.¹¹⁵ One marked aspect of Schauroth's approach to structure is her frequent movement between the two main keys of the exposition, C minor and F minor, instead of associating them with their own thematic material. The opening of the movement, indeed, immediately presents the opposing keys, with the C minor material of bars two to five reappearing in F minor in bars six to nine (Ex. 2). Passages such as bars 46–55 showcase Schauroth's fluid movement between the keys, with a brief reference to C minor in bars 50–53 in the midst of the prevailing F minor theme (Ex. 3).

Another departure from convention, following a precedent set by Beethoven, is the placement of the scherzo and trio in the second movement position. Schauroth contrasts the vigorous energy of the scherzo with the lighter trio, which threatens to trip up the pianist with its repeated notes (Ex. 4). Perhaps with reference to the mood and virtuosity of the movement, the reviewer in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* comments that the scherzo is, 'like the first and last movements of the sonata, full of blazing fire'. ('gleich dem ersten und letzten Satz der Sonate voll aufsprühenden Feuers').¹¹⁶ As suggested earlier, the virtuosity of the brilliant style is associated with the improvisatory, and is evident especially in the passages of the trio that reference the *perpetuum mobile* device (albeit with some pauses).¹¹⁷

Schauroth's decision to compose the finale in E flat major, rather than C minor, the assumed prevailing tonic of the sonata, is perhaps her most unexpected move. This work might be, in fact, among the earliest examples of progressive tonality in a sonata cycle, and attests to her innovative approach to composition.¹¹⁸ The critic in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* struggled with the striking departures from convention in the *Sonate brillante*, writing that, 'When

¹¹⁴ 'Literatur der Tonkunst', *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* no. 156 (30 December 1834): 1248. The movement is certainly constructed with reference to sonata form, though a full analysis is beyond the scope of this article. As Annette Richards notes, for earlier writers about music such as Johann Nikolaus Forkel, the fantasia could be understood as 'on the margins of rational communication in music ... , the accidental by-product of a failed sonata'. Richards, *The Free Fantasia*, 37.

¹¹⁵ On reductive readings of formal deviations as resisting 'male-defined conventions of composition' see Matthew Head, 'Genre, Romanticism and Female Authorship', 71.

¹¹⁶ 'Literatur der Tonkunst', 1248.

¹¹⁷ Targa, 'Improvisation Practices in Beethoven's *Kleinere Stücke*', 182.

¹¹⁸ The only earlier examples of which I am aware are Schubert's String Quartet No. 1, D. 18 (1810 or 1811) and his – possibly unfinished – Piano Sonata in A flat major, D. 557 (1817), neither of which was published until the end of the nineteenth century. On directional tonality in genres other than the sonata cycle in the early nineteenth century, see Harald Krebs, 'Alternatives to Monotonicity in Early Nineteenth-Century Music', *Journal of Music Theory* 25, no. 1 (1981): 1–16; and Benjamin K. Wadsworth, 'Directional Tonality in Schumann's Early Works', *Music Theory Online* 18, no. 4 (2012).

Allegro con spirito M:M: ♩ = 152

SONATE

ff risoluto

ff

trm

Ex. 2 Delphine von Schauroth, *Sonate brillante*, mvt i, bars 1–9

espress.

decresc.

con duolo

p

Ex. 3 Delphine von Schauroth, *Sonate brillante*, mvt i, bars 46–55

Scherzando leggerissimo

TRIO

p

ff

Ex. 4 Delphine von Schauroth, *Sonate brillante*, mvt ii, bars 57–72

we remarked above that the talented author (especially in the first and last movements) deviated from the usual form, we should in no way be taken to mean that we wanted to advocate a certain stereotypical manner' ('Wenn wir oben

Table 1. Key areas in Delphine von Schauroth's *Sonate brillante*

Movement	Key	Secondary Key	Additional Modulations
I: Allegro con spirito	C minor	F minor	A flat major, E flat minor
II: Scherzo	C minor	G major	
III: Adagio con molto espressione	A flat major	E flat major	
IV: Allegro tempo giusto	E flat major	E major	F minor, C minor

bemerkten, daß die talentvolle Verfasserinn (besonders im ersten und letzten Satze) von der gewöhnlichen Form abgewichen sey, so möchten wir keineswegs dafür angesehen seyn, als wollten wir einer gewissen stereotypen Manier'.¹¹⁹ However, he continues by remarking that classical models, as a loose basis for imitation, can help to provide 'an inner necessary connection of the parts and a beneficial symmetrical relationship between them' ('ein innerer nothwendiger Zusammenhang der Theile und ein wohlthuendes symmetrisches Verhältniß derselben zu einander').¹²⁰ While Schauroth's *Sonate brillante* creates the impression of a free and improvisatory character in part through unexpected harmonic choices, the work as a whole builds its own network of harmonic coherence. Although the reviewer notes that the sonata attests to Schauroth's 'full knowledge of harmony, which in the first and last movement is almost made too evident through heaps of modulations', ('von voller Kenntniß der Harmonie, welche sich im ersten und letzten Satze durch gehäufte Modulationen fast zu sehr kund gibt'),¹²¹ he seems to understand these modulations not as creating connections between the movements, but rather as drawing the piece into the conventions of the fantasy genre.¹²² However, the key areas of the movements create a chain of third relationships (F minor, A flat major, C minor, E flat major/E flat minor/E major, G major) with an especial saturation point at E flat/E (Table 1). Although the construction of the *Sonate brillante* seems governed only by the passing whims of the pianist-composer, then, this surface experience of the work belies its intentional underpinnings.

The third movement, *Adagio con molta espressione*, provides an occasion to discuss how the expressive and gestural features of the sonata (and not only formal and harmonic concerns) also contribute to its improvisatory character. The reviewer in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* comments that this movement exhibits, 'a noble song floating through the whole, in whose performance "a lot of expression" can actually be put' ('ein edler, durch das Ganze hinschwebender Gesang, in dessen Vortrag sich in der That "viel Ausdruck" legen läßt').¹²³ Accordingly, this movement leaves a lot of expressive space for the performer and might recall the oral poetry of the *improvisatrice* more than the other movements. For instance, the opening of the movement, with its halting utterances separated by rests and punctuated by arpeggiated chords, suggests dramatic speech (Ex. 5). Furthermore, when the opening material

¹¹⁹ 'Literatur der Tonkunst', 1248.

¹²⁰ 'Literatur der Tonkunst', 1248.

¹²¹ 'Literatur der Tonkunst', 1248.

¹²² On the centrality of modulation to the fantasy, see Richards, *The Free Fantasia*, especially 40–42.

¹²³ 'Literatur der Tonkunst', 1248.

Con molto espress: M:M: ♩ = 92

ADAGIO

Ex. 5 Delphine von Schauroth, *Sonate brillante*, mvt iii, bars 1–8

Ex. 6 Delphine von Schauroth, *Sonate brillante*, mvt iii, bars 49–54

returns developed in bar 51 it is introduced and interspersed with improvisatory flourishes, gestures that might stem from Schauroth's own improvisatory practice, or that recall the interweaving of Corinne's spoken dramatic statements with short interludes on the lyre (Ex. 6).

While the reviewer in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* seems to half-admire the audacious aspects of Schauroth's compositional style by bringing her work into conversation with Beethoven and musical genius, he reveals his preferences for more conventional adherence to form through his aversion to Beethoven's late style: 'even Beethoven – to whom one does not want to deny the predicate "genius", by which some understand an absolving of every rule – has observed [classical models of form] in all his works, with the exception of the last products of his imagination, which was sick like himself'.¹²⁴ However,

¹²⁴ 'selbst Beethoven – dem man doch das Prädicat 'Genie', unter welchem Manche eine Lossprechung von jeder Regel verstehen, nicht wird absprechen wollen – in allen seinen

his overarching assessment of the work speaks to her superb talents not only as a composer, but also as a pianist:

the whole work testifies to rich inventiveness that does not need to wander into the bizarre to prove itself to be original; to full knowledge of harmony ... to energy, delicacy of feeling and to great mastery in playing: for whoever gives such problems can certainly also solve them.¹²⁵

This last remark about Schauroth's *Sonate brillante* unites many elements of her portrait as a virtuosa, creator and improviser. Critics lauded Delphine von Schauroth as a genius from her early days as a *Wunderkind* onward and placed her among the great virtuoso pianists. Her compositional abilities and approach to performance led critics to regard her as a creative artist. As a pianist, she could improvise, and as a composer, her style was understood as improvisatory. She was a Corinna-sister, but she was not Corinne; her work as a performer and composer bears the 'stamp of the individual' that, for Staël's Corinne, marks the true artist.¹²⁶

Although we might wish that Schauroth had created more compositions or that more of them had been preserved, it would seem as though at least the illusion of the improvisatory was an integral aspect of her work, even when it was notated and published. Through Schauroth and her connection to the figure of Corinne, we might build a stronger context for the ways in which nineteenth-century women artists – whether fictional or actual – were understood across disciplines, add to our current understanding of the involvement of women musicians in the nineteenth-century improvisatory and grasp at some of the ephemeral wisps of this vital aspect of music making.

Werken beobachtet hat, die letzten Erzeugnisse seiner gleich ihm selbst erkrankten Phantasie [sic] etwa ausgenommen'. 'Literatur der Tonkunst', 1248.

¹²⁵ 'Das ganze Werk zeugt von reicher Erfindungsgabe, die nicht ins Bizarre zu schweifen braucht, um sich als originell zu erweisen; von voller Kenntniß der Harmonie [...], von Energie, Zartgefühl, und von großer Meisterschaft im Spiele: denn wer solche Aufgaben stellt, kann sie gewiß auch lösen'. 'Literatur der Tonkunst', 1248.

¹²⁶ Staël, *Corinne*, 111.