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Honours project entitled The educational merits in playing piano duet

Submitted by Chau On Ki

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Abstract

Piano duet has a long history, until now, there are many repertoires for piano duet. Piano duet always involves two players in one piano and it is recognized as beneficial to piano learners. The development of piano greatly promoted the development of piano duet in 18th century and more piano duet pieces were composed. From the literature review, piano duet helps to improve rhythmic control, enhancing listening and sight-reading skills, and developing cooperation. Furthermore, piano duets can raise learning interest. These merits bring positive educational effects to piano players. The purpose of this study is to find out the educational merits of play piano duet.

Many well-known composers composed piano duet pieces. In this study, Haydn's piano duet repertoire, "Il maestro e lo scolare", will be discussed. The title of the repertoire, "Il maestro e lo scolare", indicated this duet piece is for a teacher and a student that "maestro" and "scolare" represented a teacher and a student in English. Apart from offering joy of music and entertainment, "Il maestro e lo scolare", the title specified the character of two players, being a teacher and student, serving as a teaching material. The study analyzes and discusses the musical and technical musical skills, such as (1) rhythm, (2) phrasing, (3) articulation, (4) balance, (5) ornamentation and (6) coordination, of this repertoire, and discuss how this repertoire provide educational merits.

The study found that this repertoire can provide the educational merits that the literature review reported. It is also suggested that this repertoire can be used a teaching tool for piano learning and more piano duet pieces should be adjusted to include in piano lesson based on the students' abilities and learning needs.



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1. Introduction

According to Grove Dictionary of Music, piano duet refers to two players in one piano or two pianos (Sadie & Tyrrell, 2001). In this research, here is the definition for the terms that will be used; "piano duet" refers to two persons at one piano. Playing piano duet, players share one music instrument. Piano is served as a performance medium among two players. Piano duet has a long history and there are many piano duet repertories. The earliest duet piece, for example, A Verse for Two to Play, by Nicholas Carlton, and A Fancy for Two to Play, by Thomas Tomkins, were originally written for harpsichord (McGraw, 2016). In 18th century, more piano duet pieces were published.

Many famous composers composed pieces for piano duet, for example, Haydn, Mozart, Brahms and Debussy. Haydn, Franz Joseph (1732–1809), a classical master who was born in Austria. He composed the piano duet piece, Divertimento in F minor, Hob. XVIIa:1, "Il maestro e lo scolare", in 1778. It is recognized as having educational value (Sadie & Tyrrell, 2001). Playing piano duet brings benefits to players (Foster, 2006; Gallaway & Kirchner, 2012; Scriba, 2010). (Sadie & Tyrrell, 2001). Yu (2015) had made a research about piano duet in piano teaching in China's advanced normal schools and found out that using piano duet in piano teaching bring students new emotional experience and achieve a satisfactory teaching effect. Moreover, many studies research the educational merits of playing piano duet. Neither study nor research that focus on educational merits of "Il maestro e lo scolare" could be found. The purpose of this study is to investigate the educational merits of playing piano duet, and to discuss the educational values of Haydn's piano duet repertoire, "Il maestro e lo scolare", and find out its educational merits to duet piano players.

2. Literature Review

This part presents a summary of selected books, periodical journals, and theses and dissertations, reviewing relevant literatures on piano duets and piano teaching. There are literatures that give supports to piano duet brings positive educational impacts to piano players.

Music education brings sociological and socio-psychological merits to society (McCorkle, 2014). Ho (2009) reported that music education is important to the development of children in all culture. Chappell (1999) suggested that piano teachers must adapt their teaching methods to create a more individual approach towards all learners. Foster (2006) stated that piano duet is a vital enhancement of playing solo piano and suggested using piano duet as a teaching tool in the piano lessons. Teachers need to know the significance of teaching piano duets to piano beginners and intermediate students (Yin, 2004). Apart from piano teachers, siblings, parents or friends can be the partners in piano duet. When two performers play the same instrument, both performers have more in-depth understandings about the musical elements as well as the performance medium.

On the other hand, piano duet is recognized as having serval merits for the students. Piano duet is particularly valued for piano learners as it aids to develop basic musicianship and ensemble skills

(Yin, 2004). First, piano duet can improve sight reading skills. Playing piano duet enhances the **The Education University** of Hong Kong Library or private study or research only. of for publication or further reproduction. sight-reading skills, keep the tempo and reduce errors in note reading that may cause dissonances in tonal music (Weekley & Arganbright, 2007). Foster (2006) stated that students' sight-reading ability grows quickly with the use of piano duets in every piano lesson. Keller, Knoblich & Repp (2007) reported that through playing piano duet, piano players not only can recognize their performances, but also can synchronize with partners. Students with strong ability of sight reading skills can increase the practice efficiency (Yu, 2015).

Second, piano duet helps student to have better rhythmic control. Rhythm is important in all music and rhythmic stability is required to achieve a good performance. Foster (2006) reported that students gain better rhythmic constancy though playing piano duet. Duet players is required to take control of the rhythmic stability and have good technique control on syncopation, triplets and quintuplets, etc (Scriba, 2010). Teacher can use different styles of duet repertories to practice various rhythms (梁海東, 2002).

Third, piano duet helps student to improve listening skills. In playing piano duet, players need to learn to listen the balance between parts, adjust dynamics, identify melodic parts, and adapt musical interpretation, to achieve conformity (Scriba, 2010). The duet players coordinate the pedals, and operate the pedals in careful listening (Yu, 2015). Players in piano duet need consist in breathing, to balance the dynamic and unify the tone color, achieving consistency (梁海東, 2002).

Forth, piano duet can develop sense of cooperation with each other. Piano duet is different from piano solo that cooperation with other is mandatory for the first one. Piano duet involves two players and becomes a social activity. Communication is compulsory and mandatory since players needs to discuss and learn from each other. It can help students to prevent making mistake carelessly (孫卉, 2008). Duet players also need to adjust their hand and body position for the performance. The success of piano duet play depends on the joint efforts of two performers (Yu, 2015). In piano duet performance, joint actions need constant coordination of complementary actions to reach an anticipated outcome (Loehr, Kourtis, Vesper, Sebanz & Knoblich, 2013). Performers cannot simply play the music notes without affection, piano duets encourage performers to feel the music and develop musicianship (張雯, 2009). Sasanfar (2013) reported that piano duet give opportunity to players to learn physical gestures, making eye contacts before start playing. Tone balance, dynamics, and pedaling are important in cooperation (Barr, 2011).

Moreover, players need to response to each, which differentiate from solo repertories. Piano players need to deal with problems of page turning, pedaling and fingerings caused by physical proximity (Foster, 2006). Piano duet includes texture, chords or other sound combination which cannot be found in solo repertoire, so it become more vital in the aspect of education (侯穎君, 2009). Through playing piano, players need consent on tempo, dynamics, ornamentation and balance and thus developing cooperation.



Finally, piano duet helps to raise students' learning interest. Monotonous and repetitive piano training may lead to lose of learning interests. The teachers can choose some appropriate piano duet pieces as learning material that targeting on the learning needs of students, and play with students so that to make learning become interesting (李丹, 2006). Through teaching piano in the way of piano duet, it can attract students' attention, and allow students to experience and develop musicianship as well as ensemble skills (Gallaway & Kirchner, 2012). The piano teachers choose the repertories with beautiful melody or strong sense of rhythm so that the students could learn pleasantly and consolidate different piano key-touching methods, thus stimulating the learning interests and expanding music playing (Yu, 2015).

Piano duet can enhance musicianship and thus should be a part of piano lessons (Scriba, 2010). Piano duet also enhances concentration through peer motivation (Foster, 2006). Piano duet not only raises the standards and abilities of the student, but also encourages teaching quality, bringing positive effects to both teaching and learning (Leung, 2006). After reviewing various literatures, it reviews that piano duets helps to improve sight reading skills, better control of rhythm, improve listening skills, develop cooperation with other and raise students' learning interest. To summarize, piano duet can bring merits to the students in piano learning.

Haydn was an Austrian composer and he first showed his talent when he was eight and served as a choir boy in the St. Stephen's Cathedral. Started from 1761, Haydn serviced a Hungarian noble family, the Esterházys, for over thirty years, and composed variety of music that requested by his patron (Kamien, 2008). In 1778, Haydn composed the piano duet repertoire, Divertimento in F minor, Hob. XVIIa, 'Il maestro e lo scolare'. In English, 'Il maestro e lo scolare' means the Teacher and the Student. This delightful and humorous piano duet piece is in a form of theme and variations, and Haydn was good at developing theme. Haydn used the "Viennese bass octave" (Wintle, 2009). In 18th century, divertimento was used for light and brilliant works for the piano. Divertimento is a musical genre that prominent in the Classical Period and it is designed for entertainment of the players and audiences, with high artistic achievement. The earliest use of the term, "divertimento" was known as "Il divertimento de' grandi: musiche da camera, ò per servizio di tavola", that was composed by Carlo Grossi in 1681 (Sadie & Tyrrell, 2001). This Haydn's duet piece is joyful and entertaining as titled.

Despite from offering joy and entertainment, this repertoire is an effective teaching material for every piano player, developing excellent sight-reading and technical skills (McGraw, 2016; Sadie & Tyrrell, 2001). 'Il maestro e lo scolare' has positive educational merits to piano players. Through studying and playing piano duets, young piano players can acquire lots of musical and technical skills (Yin, 2004). The study will focus on the Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare", discussing the theme and its variations, and how this piece can provide educational merits to piano players, in different aspects, that will be discussed in later section.



3. Research Questions

In previous section, the literature review show that piano duet brings positive effects to students, it is worthwhile to study a piano duet piece, "Il maestro e lo scolare", and explore its educational values. Thus, there are two research questions in the study about playing piano duet.

- (1) What are the educational merits of playing piano duet to piano learners?
- (2) How the piece "Il maestro e lo scolare", by Haydn, can achieve the educational merits of playing piano duet?

4. Methodology

This study will explore the educational merits of playing piano duet through documentary research, finding information from literature, such as, books, academic journals, and other online resources, etc; and focus on analyzing the score of a piano duet piece, Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare", with educational value from different aspects, such as texture, tempo, rhythmic complexity, listening and technical skills, and antiphonal techniques.

5. Feasibility and Limitations of the Study

The purpose of the study is to reveal the educational merits of playing piano duet. The study is feasible with documentary research and score analysis. Through documentary research, relevant literatures will be reviewed and find out the educational merits that playing piano duet will bring to piano players. Moreover, the study will discover the educational merits through analyzing "Il maestro e lo scolare", a piano duet piece that composed by Haydn, with educational vales. In addition, as there are different versions of the piano duet score, such as Henle, Schott and Wiener Urtext, in this study, it will use the score from G. Henle Publisher, edited by Sonja Gerlach. Since no autograph or authorized prints are known to exist, the score that from G. Henle Publisher, is prepared by one main source from Dresden, Saxon State Library - State and University Library, Music Department, and other three secondary sources (Gerlach, 2007). In addition, parentheses indicate the additions from the secondary sources and square brackets are added by the editor in this edition (Gerlach, 2007).

Yet, there are some limitations in the study. The scope of this study was limited in the following ways: (1) only one-piano, four-hand piano music is included. (2) only educational merits of playing piano duet are discussed. (3) only one piano four-hand repertoire, Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare", is discussed in the study.

6. Analysis and Discussion

In early 18th century, Bartolomeo Cristofori, an Italian instrument maker, designed the gravicembalo con piano e forte, which is a piano with flexibility of dynamics (Rice, 2013). The development of keyboard instruments greatly enhanced the expressiveness of piano, improving dynamics and other sound effects (樂敏, 2017). The piano duet developed, and became the favorite social and musical

pastime in 18th centur The Education University of Hong Kong Library For private study or research only. Not for publication or further reproduction.

pastime in 18th century due to the economic growth of the middle class, and hence increased the Education University Hong Kong Library keyboard instrument ownership and the publication of piano duets repertories (Arango, 2013; McGraw, 2016). Compare with piano duo, which involves two pianos, piano duet was more popular in chamber music as it is convenient to perform in gathering or at home (樂敏, 2017). Teacher, parents, even brothers and sister, can involve in playing piano duet. A close relationship of players, for example, Mozart and his sister, Stravinsky and Debussy encourage them performing piano duet together, thus promoting the passion of piano duet (樂敏, 2017).

6.1 Analysis

In this study, Haydn's piano duet repertoire, "Il maestro e lo scolare" has been selected to discuss its educational merits to duet piano players. In 1778, Haydn wrote a piano duet repertoire, entitled "Il maestro e lo scolare". In the repertoire, it consists of a theme and eight variations, with the primo and the secondo part. "La parte del Scolare" and "La parte del Maestro" are marked for the primo part and the secondo part respectively. (see Example 1, beginning of the theme section). The "Secondo" and "Primo" part represents the master and the scholar (the student) respectively.



Example 1, Haydn, Il maestro e lo scolare, measures 1-10

This chapter will highlight musical and technical skills that can be found through the study of Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare". These musical and technical skills are discussed in the following order:

- 1. Rhythm
- 2. Phrasing
- 3. Articulation
- 4. Balance
- 5. Ornamentation
- 6. Coordination

6.1.1 Rhythm

In every duet piece, it is crucial to maintain accurate rhythm while performing with partner. Both



with a theme in thirty-one measures, with different music note values, for example, crochets, semiquavers (see Example 2, theme section, mm. 11-15), demisemiquavers (see Example 2), triplets in variation 2 and 3 (see Example 3a, variations 2, mm. 61-70) (Example 3b, variations 3, mm. 90-97). Rhythmic challenges occur in different variations. Hence, the varieties in rhythm values helps to develop an accurate rhythmic sense, assisting students to acquire and practice rhythmic values more effectively and accurately.



Example 2, *Ibid*, measures 11-14







Example 3b, *Ibid*, measures 91-98



The tempo of "Il maestro e lo scolare" is marked *Moderato*, which is moderate in speed. Also, neither *ritardando* nor *rubato* for tempo changes in the piece is indicated. The player acts in primo part a role of teacher, so primo in each variation of this piece begins first and plays a short phrase. That "maestro" needs to change the rhythm to introduce into a new variation (see example 4), followed by the secondo, which acts as a role of "scolare", will face the challenge of finding new rhythm and repeated the beginning phrase two octave higher. In this case, the piece provide great variety of rhythmic challenges for the student and the student should be able to assure the rhythmic accuracy.

	Secondo	Primo
Theme	La parte del Maestro	La parte del Scolare
Variation I	Var. I	31 Var. I
Variation II	a Var. II	a Var. II () () () () () () () () () ()

Example 4, Ibid, first four measures of the theme and each variation





In addition, there is a passage of playing triplet as accompaniment in variation III (see example 5). Both players need to assure the evenness of playing triplet as accompaniment and have unity in the passage.





6.1.2 Phrasing

In the theme and each variation, the teacher begins with a phrase which is immediately imitated two octaves higher by the student (see Example 4). Since the piano Secondo plays the role of teacher, secondo player plays a short phrase, while the primo player plays the repeat phrase in higher register, in a call-and-response pattern. Despite from that, two players play together at the end of the theme and variations. The signaling between players will be discussed in later section.

6.1.3 Articulation

The players should be able to differentiate different articulations indicated in the score, for example, slur and staccato. They should have consensuses of articulation so that the sounding of attack and release is in a similar style. In this case, the primo player must pay attention to listen and observe how the secondo player plays the staccato notes and the slur and articulate these notes in a similar style (see example 6). Without using the pedal, finger legato is needed playing these slurs.



Example 6 Ibid, measures 1-4



Other articulation that is legato, is found in the score (see example 7). In variation III, the secondo players part plays a lyrical melody without using the pedal while the primo players need to imitate the legato in a similar style in order to achieve unity.

Example 7, *Ibid*, measures 115-120



6.1.4 Balance

In playing piano duet, balance is one of the crucial factors that affects the overall performance. Sometimes, one player can be easily overshadowed by another player when the balance is out of control. Therefore, appropriate balance of each part is vital to present the music layers. In order to achieve decent balance, the players need to identify the roles they played. According to the Haydn's

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"Il maestro e lo scolare", the primo part and the secondo part act as student and master respectively.

Consequently, the secondo part presents the right-hand melodic lines first and then repeated by the primo part in higher register. In this case, the secondo player need to bring out a clear and projected right-hand melodic line so that the primo player can imitate and highlight the main melody. Furthermore, the melody and accompaniment that requires balance between hands in primo and secondo part, and main melody need to be emphasized.

Despite the balance of melody and accompaniment, it is important to coordinate the balance of dynamics. Throughout the score, there is no dynamic markings. However, dynamic changes are needed for stylistic performance. For example, the secondo part which acts as a role of teacher, should provide guidelines for dynamics markings (see example 8) as the primo part, the student, will imitate the performance of the teacher.



Example 8, Ibid, measures 181-190

Moreover, when two parts plays together, dynamic level should be adjusted to maintain a good balance. For example, primo part and secondo part do not have dynamic marking (see example 9) and it is suggested that the secondo part louder than the primo part's accompaniment.



Example 9, Ibid, measures 165-170



6.1.5 Ornamentation

The score includes two types of ornaments, that are trill and appoggiatura. The theme section, and variation I, III, IV, V and VIII, are ornamented. No ornament is found in variation II, VI and VII. It is remarked that the ornaments are always found in the upper staff of primo and secondo part.

Appoggiaturas are found in the theme section and variation I, V and VIII (see example 10). Also, trills are found as well in variation III, IV and V (see example 11). The section mainly has one type of ornaments, despite variation V has both trill and appoggiatura. Noted that there is a long and extended trill in right-hand primo part of variation V, measures 169-171 (see example 12). Furthermore, in variation III, according to the comments on the trills, except measure 99 and 119 in both primo and secondo part, other trills are replaced by a turn. Also, it is suggested that trill at 2nd note instead of the original note, in measure 94 and 114 in upper staff of primo part, and measure 92 and 112 in upper staff of secondo part (Gerlach, 2007). Example 10, *Ibid*, theme and variations I, V, VIII













Example 11, *Ibid*, variation III, IV and V











6.1.6 Coordination

Piano duet involves two piano players, and requires cooperation and teamwork in ensemble playing. "Il maestro e lo scolare" is a piano duet piece and two players are included in the performance. In this case, signaling is needed for players to communicate as they need to work with each other. Players of "Il maestro e lo scolare" should give the nonverbal signals to the partner so that the piece will not be interrupt. Some good nonverbal signals, such as breathing and eye contact, are used a cue to help players to communicate during the performing, signaling about when to start or end a phrase together, or when to join again, etc.

In addition, the piece is illustrated as a score for teacher and student as mentioned before, the secondo plays first and the primo part repeat after that, there are two types of entry of a new phrase. In example 13, arrows are marked in the score of primo part and the arrows represents the entry point of secondo part, vice versa. The first one is shown as a call-and-response pattern. For example, the secondo starts a short phrase in measure 11 with pick-up which ends in 2nd beat in measure 11 and the primo player repeat the phrase immediately in 2 1/2 beat in measure 11 (see example 13). Another one is found in measure 20 that the secondo part repeats the motive after a quaver rest in both primo and secondo part (see example 13).







In this piece, it includes hand-crossing challenges in primo and secondo part in variation VI. For example, measures 182-190 in primo part of variation VI and measures 180-190 in secondo part of variation VI, including hand-crossing challenges. In secondo part, the player need to raise the right hand to a lower playing position, to play the note C (second beat) in measure 183 and play the note F (first beat) in measure 184 (see example 14b). After secondo illustrate the hand-crossing playing, the primo part imitates similar hand-crossing challenge in measure 182-184.





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Example 14b, Ibid, measures 180-190



Moreover, the score includes various of articulation and ornamentation. The primo players need to listen how the secondo players illustrate carefully. The players need to watch and give signals to each other, and have communication, such as watching, listening, signaling and responding between players. Furthermore, the players need to decide who is responsible for page turning since "Il maestro e lo scolare" is a piece with total 271 measures.

6.2 Discussion

To sum up, Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare" consists of various musical and technical skills and brings educational merits. On one hand, there are several ornaments, articulation and phrasing, that players need to deal with these technical challenges. For example, both players can have better control of rhythm through coping with rhythmic challenge in the theme and variations that consist of different rhythms. Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare" can help players to have practice control on rhythm.

In addition, "Il maestro e lo scolare" can improve sight-reading skills and raise students' learning interest. "Il maestro e lo scolare" piece is an outstanding sight-reading study material (Yin, 2004). The motive which firstly introduced in the theme section, is simple and riveting. The humorous motive adds entertainment into the duet playing. Through playing "Il maestro e lo scolare", students can also learn easily by imitating as well. Moreover, it provides some of challenges in solo repertoire, for instance, dynamics, articulation and phrasing, etc, while it provides unique challenges of duet piece, for instance, balance and signaling, etc.

On the other hand, the piece helps develop to cooperation with other and listening skills. Ensemble playing supports to build up performers' confidence and develop better team spirit (Tan, 2007). Coordination can be found in the entire piece since this piece involves two players and they are rely on to each other. In this case, the "scolare" dependent on the "maestro" and imitate the phrase that the "maestro". Also, the hand-crossing challenges allow players to experience crossed hand passage. Through non-verbal signals, the players listen and watch to each other while improving listening skills. When the "scolare" parts plays, that performer must listen to the "maestro" part so that to imitate the phrasing in exact rhythm. Also, in order to achieve balance in dynamics, articulation and phrasing, even ornamentation, two players must reach an agreement on illustrating these matters.

The Education University of Hong Kong Library For private study or research only. Not for publication or further reproductio The piece is in the form of theme and variation. it allows composers to have alterations on the main musical idea, and thus comprises more other music techniques while the players can acquire different through performing the piece. A musical motive is repeated, and each variation provides different challenges, such as rhythm and harmony. Technical and musical challenges are found in the score that the student need to tackle

Yet, no pedaling can be learnt in this score. Since no pedaling sign is marked in the score of "Il maestro e lo scolare", drilling about pedaling in this piece is impossible. Also, other ornamentation, such as turn, mordent, acciaccatura and arpeggiation, are not included in this piece

7. Suggestion for Future research

In this study, it aims to find out the educational merits of playing Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare". As this study only focus on "Il maestro e lo scolare", here are some recommendation for future researchers. Firstly, future researchers can investigate other piano duet pieces and compare their effectiveness. Nevertheless, this study only discussed the educational merits based on one piano duet piece, there are still other possible investigation for piano duo. Secondly, future researchers can explore the merits of playing piano duos that involves two pianos and two piano players. Thirdly, future researchers can explore on the pedagogical aspects of playing piano duet, carrying out experiments to examine the possible merits that using piano duet in teaching and learning. Lastly, future researchers can explore the merits of other form of duet music, such as string instruments and woodwind instruments.

8. Conclusion

To conclude, this study aims to find out the educational merits of playing piano duet and to discuss the educational value of Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare". Piano duet is an effective teaching tool that it enriches the content of piano teaching if teachers use it appropriately (孫卉, 2008). This study focuses on educational aspects of piano duet and focus on one piano duet repertoire. From the literature review, it summarizes that piano duet brings educational merits to piano players, for example, developing sight reading skills, better rhythmic control, improving listening skills, developing cooperation with partner and raising learning interest of students. Since piano duet is indicated that brings educational merits to players, it is worthwhile to find out the educational merits of Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare".

From the analysis and discussion of the study, Haydn's "Il maestro e lo scolare" can brings the educational merits mentioned in section of literature review. One important to note is that, lots of musical skills and techniques are included in this masterly piece. Using the music form of theme and variation allows composers to have alterations on the main musical idea, and thus comprises more other music techniques while the players can acquire different through performing the piece.



Last but not least, "Il maestro e lo scolare" is an excellent teaching and studying material for the piano duet as it brings educational merits. Music teacher, parents, friends or siblings can be the partners of piano duet. Piano duet also offers other possible learning environment outside classroom. Piano duet is worked as a teaching means. The development of piano education should keep abreast of the time. Piano teachers can adopt piano duet piece in teaching from different resources and influence the music passion of younger generation.



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10. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Score of Haydn "Il maestro e lo scolare"



































