Between 1790 and 1830 a generation of composers set out to cultivate the Romantic elements inherent in the Classical style. These composers include the Bohemian pianist Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760-1812), who wrote a large quantity of music for his chosen instrument. Today, Dussek’s piano sonatas are considered his greatest musical achievement because a number of these works are characterized by a fully-developed Romantic style.

Second only in significance to the piano sonatas are Dussek’s sixteen concertos, published between 1781 and 1810. Eleven of the concertos are for piano alone, four are for harp or piano, and one is for two pianos. In these works Dussek develops a Romantic harmonic style within the parameters of Classical forms. Early in his career the composer crystallized his conception of the formal structures he would use in each of the three concerto movements, and from the first concerted work to the last his conception of these forms remains within the boundaries of musical Classicism. Although the forms of Dussek’s concerto movements belong to the Classical period, his harmonic practice looks to the future. The roots of his tonal language lie within the Classical style. In over half of these concertos Dussek’s treatment of harmony is no different from that of other Classic composers. In the remaining concertos Dussek gradually stretches the limits of tonality until a Romantic harmonic language becomes an integral part of his style.

Thus, the most significant elements of these compositions are form and harmony; both are worthy of detailed investigation. The objective of this dissertation is to describe Dussek’s treatment of the forms he used in his concertos and to chronicle his gradual expansion of tonality within these works. The fulfillment of this objective, in turn, will be of value for three reasons. First, a clearer picture of Dussek’s musical style will emerge. Second, an assessment of these works will increase the amount of information being gleaned by scholars about the Classic concerto. Finally, this monograph will contribute toward a better understanding of the transition from Classicism to Romanticism.