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GRADUATE RECITAL

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Master of Music

Nan Sun

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

May, 2016

GRADUATE PIANO RECITAL

Nan Sun

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GRADUATE PIANO RECITAL

An Abstract of the Thesis by
Nan Sun

This thesis contains information pertaining to my Graduate Piano Recital. The recital consists of the following works: Piano Sonata Op. 26 by Ludwig Van Beethoven; French Suite No. 2 by Johann Sebastian Bach; Keyboard Concerto in D major, Hob. XVIII: 11 by Franz Joseph Haydn; Scherzo Op. 4 by Johannes Brahms. The thesis includes biographical information on each composer, introductions of each different genre and character; an analysis of each piece, and performance suggestions.

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Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Graduate Recital

Nan Sun, Piano

Tuesday, April 26, 2016

McCray Recital Hall

7:30 pm

Program

French Suite in C minor, BWV 813 Johann Sebastian Bach

-*Allemande* (1685-1750)

-*Courante*

-*Sarabande*

-*Air*

-*Meneut*

-*Gigue*

Keyboard Concerto in D Major, Hob. XVIII:11.....Franz Joseph Haydn

I. *Vivace* (1732 - 1809)

II. *Un poco Adagio*

III. *Rondo all' Ungarese. Allegro assai*

Orchestral Reduction, Reena Natenberg

Intermission

Piano Sonata in A flat Major, Op. 26 Ludwig van Beethoven

I. *Andante con Variazioni* (1770 - 1827)

II. *Scherzo. Allegro molto*

III. *Marcia Funebre*

IV. *Allegro*

Scherzo in E flat minor, Op. 4 Johannes Brahms

(1833 - 1897)

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music Performance degree for
Ms. Sun.

The Department of Music is a constituent of the College of Arts and Sciences

CHAPTER I

Bach French Suite BWV 813 in C Minor

Biography

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) was a German composer and a famous musician of the Baroque period. He was born into a great musical family, and the Bach's were known for generations. Sebastian's father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, was a professional musician who was the director of the Stadtpfeifer at Eisenach. He was also a local musician and first and foremost a violinist. His family members were all musicians whose posts included church organist, court chamber musicians, instrumentalists, and composers.¹

Bach had a really strong musical background. Everyday, the family home was filled with all kinds of musical sounds, such as practicing and tuning, therefore, Bach had an ideal environment in which to learn music. He even learned the basic rudiments of instruments by himself.² Sebastian was a

¹ Johann Sebastian Bach, *The Ursprung 1735*, ed. Peter Bach (n.d.), in BachonBach.com, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.bachonbach.com/johann-sebastian-bach/the-ursprung-1735-by-johann-sebastian-bach/the-ursprung-byjohann-sebastian-bach-part-2/>.

² Richard D. P. Jones, *Creative Development of Johann Sebastian Bach*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Vol. I, 3.

member of the *chorus musicus* at Eisenac, and was known as the soloist who had an ‘uncommonly fine soprano voice’.³ From 1695-1700, Sebastian was trained in playing keyboard instruments, such as organ and harpsichord, by his elder brother Johann Christoph Bach. In 1702, Sebastian became an organist at St. James' Church (German: *Hauptkirche St. Jacobi*). The young J.S. Bach was sought out as a great organist rather than a composer.

In 1708, Sebastian moved to Weimar and worked there as court organist. During that time, he presented all the possible artistry of the organ and wrote most of his organ works. He also wrote about thirty cantatas and the *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor*, BWV 582. In 1717, Bach received a further honor from the reigning Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen who called Bach to be his Kapellmeister. Following, he composed his famous keyboard piece, *Das wohltemperierte Klavier* (*The Well-Tempered Clavier* book 1), which contains preludes and fugues in all twenty-four major and minor keys and was published in 1722. In the year 1723, Bach went to Leipzig as music director and cantor at the Thomas-Schule and became the Duke of Weissenfels' Kapellmeister. In 1736, he was named Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Court Composer. In these years, Bach composed a series of suites, including English Suites and French Suites, overtures and concertos, as well as sonatas and music for other small ensembles. The most important works from this period are the Brandenburg Concertos.

³ C.P.E. Bach and J.F. Agricola, *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*, eds. David T. Hans, Arthur Mendel, and Christoph Wolff (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 299.

Because of his unhealthy behavior of studying music by candlelight and working through the night, Bach's eyesight worsened. In the year 1749, he eventually became blind. He left an amount of uncompleted works at his death. One of them is the famous fugue: *Die Kunst der Fuge* (The Art of Fugue), which is "a set of fugal pieces which has fascinated musicians and commentators ever since."⁴

The Suites of Bach

A suite generally refers to a set of dances, also called *suite de danses*. This type of music originated in the early part of the seventeenth century and was popular in the Baroque era. The most important suites Bach wrote are the English Suites⁵ (6, BWV 806-811), the French Suites (6, BWV 812-817), and the Partitas (6 BWV 825-830)⁶. In the suite, the typical dance movements (and their order) are: allemande, courante, sarabande and gigue. The optional dances are usually inserted between the sarabande and the gigue. The possibilities for the optional dances include: minuet, bourrée, gavotte, air, anglaise, loured, and polonaise. Typically, all the standard and optional dances are in binary form with a double-bar near the middle with each part repeated. In addition, the two parts use similar material but are distinguished by their harmonic routes: the first part moves from tonic to dominant or relative key, the second part makes its way through various excursions as it travels back to the tonic.

⁴ "Johann Sebastian Bach," *ClassicalNet*, accessed March 9, 2016, <http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/bachjs.php>

⁵ The English Suites are more expansive and larger than French Suites. Each English Suite has an introductory opening movement placed before the Allemande.

⁶ The partitas were written later than the French and English Suites. They also contain an introductory movement and some may have a different dance order. With the Partitas, Bach challenges the performer's capacity in terms of technique and stamina.

French Suites

The six French Suites are in D minor, C minor, B minor, E-flat major, G major, and E major. Bach composed these suites for the clavier between the years of 1722-1725⁷. The name 'French' was not given by Bach, yet, their emphasis on ornamentation and elaboration can be seen as "French." Additionally, according to Forkel and Sanford, they may be called "French" to the extent that the dance forms are used; however, the order is mostly German.⁸

Analysis of French Suite No. 2 in C Minor

Allemande

A dance in moderate tempo and duple meter, the Allemande first appeared in the early 16th century and became a stylized dance type in the 17th century. It is a French term meaning German dance. The allemande was generally used as the first movement of a dance suite. In addition, it typically retains two parts. In Bach's French Suite No. 2, the allemande as well as has two parts. The first part has eight measures with a repeat sign, and the second part has ten measures.

Over all it is written in three voices and occasionally four. The left hand is generally a simple walking bass line. The right hand plays two voices, and these voices (especially the soprano), are highly decorative with sixteenth note and thirty-second note figures. They are set in a dialogue fashion with much use of the following figure (Figure 1).

⁷ 6. Johann Sebastian Bach, *French Suites, BWV812-817*. Embellished version, Barenreiter Urtext. Alfred Durr, ed. (New York: Baerenreiter Verlag. 1959).

⁸ Johann Nikolaus Forkel & Charles Sanford Terry. *Johann Sebastian Bach*. (Project Gutenberg, 2011), 112.

Figure 1 (m. 1)



Part A (ms. 1-8), starts in the key of C minor and ends on a G major chord, the dominant degree of C minor. There are two explanations for the G chord at the end of part I. The first explanation is that it modulates to G major because it sounds conclusive and ends with a secondary chord progression (Figure 2). This fits the modulation principle. Another explanation is that the music remains in C minor by using a G major chord as a Picardy ending⁹ (Figure 2).

Part B (ms. 9-18), starts briefly in G major yet ends in the key of C major with a Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC), which is also called a Picardy Third (Figure 2).

Figure 2 (ms. 7-8)



V₇/V V₇ viio/V V

Figure 3 (m. 18)



Performance Challenges

For the performer, the main challenge of this dance is planning the color and dynamic of each voice. The suites were composed for the keyboard (the harpsichord or the clavichord), not for the modern piano. The old keyboard was limited in

⁹ A practice from the 16th century and the Baroque era of ending a composition with a major chord, when the rest of the composition is in a minor key, thus giving the composition a sense of finality. Ex: In the key of C minor (C - E flat - G), the final chord would be (C - E - G).

dynamics and colors, yet the modern piano is not. Thus, how to play Baroque music by using the modern piano is still a bone of contention. As a piano player, the typical way to perform several voices at the same time is by choosing a different color/dynamic for each voice. The top voice is the easiest for the audience to hear and the bass line implies the harmony. Usually, the top voice is a little brighter and the bottom voice is a little bit darker. In this dance, the middle voices should be distinguished from these two voices by choosing appropriate colors. For the specific stylized sound and texture of the Baroque period, the performer may choose to use a detached articulation. The choice for fingering needs a lot of attention as well, because the composer uses many ties in the composition. The performer needs to change the fingering to keep the music moving without hesitation. The performer will also need to hold a long note and use the other fingers to play another voice (Figure 3).

Figure 3



Courante

The Courante, which also can be called corrente, coranto and corant, is a dance from the late Renaissance and the Baroque era that consists of two parts. The word courante is of French origin, and means “running.” A Courante has a quick triple time

(3/4), and often makes use of motives and sequences. Meanwhile, it is more elaborate and can vary its rhythmic structure, (for example, ms. 46-49).

The Courante of Bach's French Suite No. 2 has two parts. Part A (ms. 1-24), starts in C minor and ends in G major. The first cadence appears in m. 4 with a half cadence in the key of C minor. From m. 5, Bach uses sequence progressions and ends on the second beat of m.16 with a PAC¹⁰ in the key of E-flat major (relative major). From m. 17, Bach uses sequence progressions as well and finally ends in G major.

Part B (ms. 25-57), starts briefly in G major yet ends in C minor; however, it modulates to F minor and E-flat major in between. The first period extends from ms. 25-38 and ends in F minor with a PAC. The F minor tonality appears from m. 31. The second period starts in F minor in m. 38, and then Bach uses a sequence technique again to return to C minor.

Performance Challenges

Articulation is important in this dance, and the detached technique is also suggested for the quarter notes. The performer must maintain a steady internal rhythm while projecting the different patterns and shapes outlined by the right hand's running eighth notes.

Sarabande

Sarabande is also a French term. It is derived from the Spanish "zaravanda." The Sarabande is an expressive, slow, stately dance in triple time. It usually has a lyrical melody and is highly ornamented.

¹⁰ PAC: Perfect Authentic Cadence.

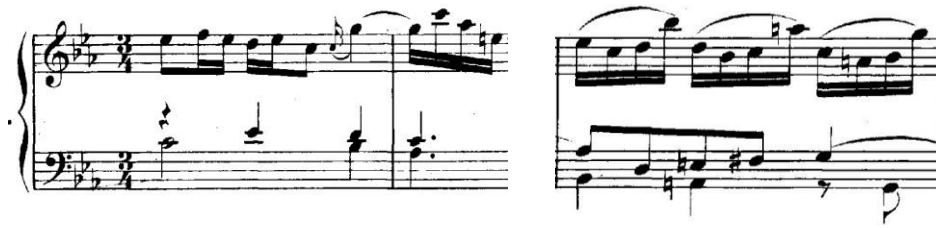
This Sarabande contains two parts. Part A (ms. 1-8), starts in C minor; this time however, Bach ends the first section in the relative major instead of using the Picardy chord as in the previous two dances. The first phrase is four measures long, and the second phrase is a parallel phrase that presents the modulation.

Part B (ms. 9-24), starts in E-flat major, and then Bach modulates the music to C minor with a half cadence in m. 16. In m. 17, the music starts with the same melody as the beginning but is varied immediately. The music remains in C minor until the end.

Performance Challenges

The main challenge for the performance of this sarabande is to play the melody legato with a strong expressive emotion and create long musical lines. Although this movement is highly lyrical, it has some really beautiful wide leaps. These leaps need to be approached carefully to maintain the singing style, for example, in the first measures of each phrase and in m. 11 (Figure 4). Another challenge is to distinguish the voices by choosing different colors or dynamics for each one, similar to the Allemande. In this Sarabande, there are three voices. The left hand plays two voices consistently. The bass voice needs to be played deeply but without heaviness and the player should pay attention to the middle voice to imply its harmonic nuance. The voice in the middle line is harder to play and shape because there is much use of the thumb which is a heavy finger.

Figure 4 (m. 1, & m. 11)



Air

The word Air is the Italian translation for the French word “Aria.” The Air is a short songlike piece (or at least not a dance), and it usually is used in opera. The melodies are sometime derived from folk songs and ballads. In the French Suites, the Air is used in Suite II and in Suite IV.

This Air, in 2/2 meter, is very short, only sixteen measures divided into two parts. The first part has four measures. It starts in C minor, but there is a modulation that occurs on the second beat of m. 3 that ushers in the second ending in E-flat major. The second ending is more conclusive because of the strong PAC. Part B is twelve measures long. It starts from m. 5. Bach uses a sequence technique again in ms. 9-12. The music returns to C minor at m. 13. After a series of sequences, the key ends in C minor as well.

Performance Challenges

One of the challenges of this movement is to play the running notes evenly keeping the sound light. The rhythm needs to be played as two beats per measure. Another challenge is playing the note that follows a tied note with a big leap. For example, the F in m. 5 has a tie to the down beat of m. 6. The E and D that follow in

m.6 (Figure 5), need to be played without accent.

Figure 5 (ms. 5-6)



Menuet

Menuet, a French term for minuet, is a dance for two people. In 3/4 meter, the dancers move in small steps to the music. This term also refers to a type of music that accompanies a dance, or a short movement that was used in classical sonatas or symphonies.

This menuet has two parts. Part A is from ms.1-8 with different endings. It starts in C minor, and there is a modulation to E-flat minor in the second ending with a strong PAC. Part B is from ms. 9-32, beginning in E-flat major and ending in C minor. The first phrase is from ms. 9-16. It starts in E-flat major, but from m. 14, the music is in F minor. From m. 17, Bach presents another sequence progression followed by a two measured trill in ms. 25-26. Before the trill, Bach returns to C minor through the sequences and remains there until the end.

Performance Challenges

This menuet is a typical one. The triple time must be pronounced, yet the performer needs to play it elegantly. Stylistically speaking, one may choose to play the slurred eighth notes smoothly and the quarter notes detached. The figures alternate between the hands throughout the movement. Another challenge is with the six-beat

trill in ms. 25-26. The trill must be played evenly. This means that the performer should plan how many trilled notes should be played within each beat.

Figure 8 (ms. 1-2)



Gigue

The Gigue is of English origin with a different pronunciation in French and different writing, “Giga,” in Italian. Typically, the Gigue is a fast movement in triple or compound meter: 3/8, 6/8, 9/8 or 12/8 (usually dotted). In Bach’s suites, he employs the more elaborate French type of Gigue. (The Italian giga is much simpler and subtler and uses less imitative counterpoint.¹¹)

This Gigue is the longest movement in this suite. It contains two parts and two voices. Part A includes ms. 1-32, beginning in the key of C minor and ending in the key of G major. In the beginning, the music starts in C minor, but moves to E-flat major through over the sequences. The first clear cadence appears in m. 23 in E-flat major. Nine measures later, this part ends in G major with a PAC in m. 32.

Part B (ms. 33-84), is fifty-two measures long and starts in G major. The climax of this piece appears at the end of this part as the dynamic reaches its loudest point at the highest note, C⁶, which occurs in m. 52. The melody wanders between C⁶ and C⁵ until it rests on B (m. 55). From m. 57 until the end the music starts with the same

¹¹ F. E. Kirby, *Music for Piano* (Cambridge: Amadeus Press, LLC. 1995), p.45.

material as before; however, Bach adds sixteenth notes as a new rhythmic pattern from m. 69. These faster rhythmic values makes the music more exciting and the dynamics increase as the end approaches.

Performance Challenges

The main challenge of this movement is to correctly play the dotted rhythms. The dotted notes appear in almost every measure, and the tempo is fast. It is easy to play them shorter than they need to be. The performer needs to practice slowly and count the meter at the same time, then speed up little by little to make sure the beats are correct. Because of the dotted notes, one may also naturally accent the downbeat of each measure. Rather, the downbeats need to be placed carefully and with the sense of crafting a phrase. In addition, this movement is very difficult to memorize because although the melodies sound similar, they are not. The performer can identify the keys and chord progressions to help with memorizing.

CHAPTER II

Haydn Keyboard Concerto in D Major, Hob. XVIII: 11

Biography

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), Austrian composer of pure German stock¹², was one of the most important composers who “was among the creators of the fundamental genres of classical music, and his influence upon later composers is immense.”¹³ He was instrumental for establishing the classical sonata form.¹⁴

Haydn’s father was a wheelwright, yet Haydn showed his musical talent at a very young age. At about the age of five, he was given to Franck, a Hainburg schoolmaster who was Haydn’s first music teacher and who taught him the rudiments of music. When Haydn was eight years old, he went to Vienna as a choirboy at St. Stephen’s Cathedral. At age seventeen, his voice began to change, so he left the choir and became a teacher and violin player to support himself. Simultaneously, he was, for a

¹² Tim Rutherford-Johnson, Michael Kennedy, and Joyce Bourne Kennedy, “Haydn, Franz Joseph,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* 6 ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), Accessed March 21, 2016, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199578108.001.0001/acref-9780199578108-e-4268>

¹³ “Franz Joseph Haydn.” *Bio*. n.d. Accessed March 21, 2016. <http://www.biography.com/people/franz-joseph-haydn-9332156>.

¹⁴ Haydn’s sonata principles: the composition of 3 movements, later in four. The first movement is usually in sonata-allegro form, and it has Exposition with two themes, Development, and Recapitulation. The second movement usually is a slow movement with A-B-A form. The third movement has variety options: allegro, rondo, minuet and trio. The fourth movement was expanded in 19th century, usually inserting a minuet between second and third movement, but Beethoven was the first person who used the scherzo instead of the minuet.

time, a pupil-manservant to the Italian composer, Nicola Porpora, in Vienna, with whom he studied counterpoint and harmony. Haydn soon became his assistant in exchange for lessons; however, in composition he was largely self-taught. Haydn studied the works of C. P. E. Bach, Johann Fux's "Gradus ad Parnassum," and others. In 1761, Haydn was engaged as a vice - Kapellmeister in Eisenstadt, Hungary, by Prince Paul Esterházy. He worked for the Esterházy family, both Prince Paul and his successor Prince Nikolaus, for nearly thirty years. During that time, 'There was no one near to confuse me, so I was forced to become original'¹⁵ he later said. This position provided him with financial support so that he could focus on his own musical career.

Haydn was involved with several jobs for that position, and his fame spread accordingly. He conducted the orchestra, arranged and directed operatic performances, and played in church. He also composed many works, such as symphonies, operas, marionette operettas, masses, chamber pieces, and dance music, all which Haydn was expected to compose for the prince's entertainment.¹⁶ Haydn also contributed to the development of chamber music, such as the piano trio.¹⁷ His fame, due to his work on musical form earned him the title of "Father of the Symphony" and "Father of the String Quartet."¹⁸

In 1791, Haydn was invited by the violinist Salomon to travel to England. In 1792, he received an honorary doctorate from Oxford University, and between

¹⁵ Michael Steen, "Haydn." *Independent*. Accessed March, 21, 2016.
<http://www.independent.co.uk/ebooks/haydn-9615517.html>.

¹⁶ "Franz Joseph Haydn." *Classical Net*. Accessed March, 21, 2016.
<http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/haydnfj.php>.

¹⁷ Basil Smallman, *The Piano Trio: Its History, Technique, and Repertoire*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 16–19.

¹⁸ Charles Smallman, *The classical style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven (2nd ed.)*, (New York: Norton, 1997)

1791-1795, Haydn composed the London Symphonies, also called the Salomon Symphonies. In 1795, he returned to Vienna and wrote *The Creation* and *The Seasons*.

Haydn was a composer with a huge output and was one of the few composers to have so much of his important music published during his life time. He wrote in many genres including many pieces for chamber music and over one hundred symphonies. His keyboard works are also important, such as the fifty-two keyboard sonatas and the keyboard concertos. His music circulated widely and he was the most celebrated composer in Europe. Many classical composers were influenced by him, such as Mozart and Beethoven.

Concertos and Haydn's Keyboard Concertos

The keyboard concerto was one of the primary genres used in the 18th century. The concerto had been developed extensively, and it became a favorite for many composers.

Haydn composed eleven keyboard concertos, and the most popular keyboard concertos is the D major, Hob. XVIII: 11. According to NAXOS,

Joseph Haydn's concertos for keyboard instruments contain some of his most personable and readily enjoyable music. Their lively fast movements framing lyrical Andantes, Adagios and Largos, never fail to delight with their unaffected virtuosity and gallant charm. Composed at a crucial juncture in the keyboard concerto's development as a popular genre, Haydn's contributions recall comparable works by Baroque masters such as Handel, match the Rococo grace of J. C. Bach, and occasionally point towards the larger-scale Classical piano concertos of Mozart.¹⁹

¹⁹ Franz Joseph Haydn, *Haydn Keyboard Concertos*, with Cologne Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Helmut Muller-Bruhl, recorded May 12-14, 2007 NAXOS, 2008. CD

Analysis of the Keyboard Concerto in D Major, Hob. XVIII: 11

The keyboard concerto in D major is the most popular one among the concertos and it is performed often. This concerto is comprised of both attractive melodies and tightly organized figures. Haydn used the conventional ritornello design which is based on the alternation of solo and tutti and employs various instrumental groups against the soloist. The strings play the main accompanying role. This concerto maintains a typical classical style of three movements.

First Movement

The first movement is a Vivace movement in D major, 4/4 meter. This movement is in sonata form. The exposition is one hundred and three measures long including a double exposition, one by orchestra and one by the solo pianist. Haydn did not use many clear cadences or typical sonata principles to identify the parts in this sonata form. He also often preferred to use asymmetrical phrases. In the beginning, the orchestra plays the first exposition (ms. 1-48), and the first two measures include two motives: x and y (Figure 1), which appear throughout the movement many times with different small alterations. The theme is simple and the character is joyful. The staccato articulation contributes to the light-hearted mood.

Figure 1

m. 1: motive x m. 2: motive y



The solo enters from m. 49 and plays the second exposition. It repeats the orchestra's exposition. In the STA,²⁰ (ms. 69-126), the orchestra and the soloist play the melody alternatively and the solo participates with added voices which are based on the orchestral exposition. From ms. 91-102, the melody seems to be going to the second theme which appears with a syncopated figure. This part, ms. 91-102, stays in A major, and the syncopated figure also comes from the orchestral exposition (Figure 2). From ms. 103-113, the melody moves back to theme I but stays in A major. From ms. 113, the orchestra takes the main role again with motive y, and the music leads to B minor slightly before the beginning of the development section.

Figure 2

m. 31 (orchestra)



m. 91 (solo)



The developmental part of this movement starts in m. 127 with the same melody as theme I but in the relative minor, B minor. It only lasts for six measures before returning to D major. This is unusual for a sonata form.²¹ From ms. 160-163, the harmony alters between the dominant and tonic chords of D major. This high number of concluding figures implies the dominant preparation.

²⁰ STA: Secondary Tonal Area

²¹ The typical developmental section is unstable. The composers like to use the theme or motive to create variations or using modulations to make the section sounds more contrast and unstable.

Following the dominant preparation is theme III (ms. 164-175), Haydn uses brand new material in this theme and stays in D major. The main melody is a repeated step figure played by both solo and orchestra (Figure 3).

Figure 3



The recapitulation of this movement starts in m. 175. The orchestra plays the first phrase, and the soloist enters in the second phrase with a slightly different melody and an unchanged harmony. The music repeats the rest of the PTA from the exposition section. The STA starts from m. 195 in D major which follows the typical sonata principle.

Haydn did not write the Cadenza for this movement. This Cadenza was written by Sonja Gerlach.²² It is comprised of motive y, the syncopation pattern, groups of sixteenth notes, and octave note figures which were previously heard. It is a fitting summation for this movement.

Performance Challenges

²² Sonja Gerlach was born in Hannover in 1936. She obtained a secondary school teaching degree (Staatsexamen) in music and mathematics in Berlin. From 1965 to 1999 she was a research associate and editor at the Joseph Haydn-Institut in Cologne. In addition to her work as an editor and researcher she addressed questions concerning the chronology of Haydn's symphonies. She is also very interested in problems of ascertaining authenticity of works in Haydn's different genres. <http://www.henle.de/en/the-publishing-house/contributors/sonja-gerlach.html>

Generally, for the performer who plays a concerto, the most challenging thing is cooperation between the soloist and orchestra. Sometimes the soloist will likely play with a little rhythmic freedom, and that needs the particular coordination with the orchestra.

Another challenge for playing a concerto is balance. The melodies sometimes are alternated between the orchestra and the soloist. The soloist must know when to stand out against the whole orchestra. The soloist also needs to control their volume and color to be sure they are distinguished from the orchestra. For this particular movement, the performer must aim for a clear texture, precise articulation, and capture the particular wit and humor so characteristic of Haydn

Second Movement

The second movement is a slow movement in A major. This movement is in ternary form: A – B – A¹. In the beginning, it also follows the typical concerto format: the orchestra plays first and the soloist follows with the same melody.

This movement opens with an extremely lyrical Adagio in the strings. There are two themes present in the beginning. The strings play material A (Figure 4a). Material B is from ms. 4-8, marked Tutti. For material B, Haydn uses triplet sixteenth-notes on the last beat of the measure followed by a longer duration on the next down beat. This provides the music with a strong rolling sense. In m. 9, the solo enters and plays material A twice, but varies it the second time. From ms. 17-21, the music changes to E major and moves into a higher register. Haydn uses more thirty-second notes. From

Section B starts at m. 32 and is played by the orchestra. Section B primarily uses material B and is in E minor. There are three sequences. The E 7 chord then returns us to A major. Section A¹ section appears from ms. 45-48; the music repeats ms. 9-11 and is played by the orchestra. The solo comes in at m. 48. From m. 55, the music repeats material B but in A major.

Figure 4 a (ms. 1-3) Material A



20



Performance Challenges

For a slow movement, the most difficult thing is controlling the sound and sustaining the legato line. For this slow movement, portraying the emotion of its pleading-like dialogue is also challenging for the performer. The legato pedal can be tricky; the performer needs to be careful to not change the pedal too soon in order to create the legato line.

Third Movement

In the third movement, the structure is more complicated. Although Haydn gave the title: Rondo all' Ungarese (meaning Rondo in Hungarian style), it does not fit the standard Rondo form. Haydn presents many motives and he uses a lot of leaps and staccatissimos to establish a vivid and dynamic feeling. Theme I is twelve measures long with a strong PAC in D major and is played by both the solo and the orchestra. The following twelve measures repeat the same melody and is played by the orchestra only. In the first measure, Haydn presents motive x (Figure 5), as model which he uses many times throughout this movement. From ms. 25-50, the music sounds like a transition because of the unstable tonality. It starts with motive x, in E minor, and then is immediately followed by motive y (Figure 5). Haydn playfully reverses the

direction of motive y in ms. 34, 36, and 38. From ms. 51-77, Haydn presents Theme I again but in A major and gives a strong ending with terminative function²³.

Figure 5 (m. 1)

motive: x



motive: y



Ms. 78-149, is a big section which maintains a developmental function. In the first four measures, the music stays in A major by using two descending phrases. Following, Haydn takes motive x and y again to build this section. The key never feels stable. From ms. 122-149, Haydn writes a long chordal progression that ends with a strong half cadence in D major.

Theme II appears at m. 150. Haydn presents this theme with brand new material and asymmetrical phrases in the parallel minor, D. Furthermore, he writes a trill on each melodic note of the first phrase. These trills and their effect add a Hungarian flavor and make the music more exuberant. In m. 186, motive x and y appear in the section again but in A minor. Haydn then modulates to D minor again.

From m. 201, theme I is exactly repeated, the solo plays the first six measures and the orchestra responds with a different ending, because Haydn wants to modulate to B minor for the next section.

²³ Terminative function: a melody which consists almost exclusively of members of the dominant and tonic chords and reinforces the static tonal quality of the section.

The next section starts with theme III. Haydn uses a faster rhythmic pattern for this theme, but the key is relatively more stable than in the other sections. He gives a clear perfect authentic cadence in first period and puts another terminative function ending to reinforce the B minor. Another interesting thing about this ending is the last two notes. Haydn did not use a chord progression or create a melody as a preparation to modulate the key for next section; he just used two chromatically descending notes to return to the original key (Figure 6).

At the last second, Haydn goes back to theme I. In this section, Haydn mostly stays in D major, except for the sequence part (ms. 266-273). At the end of this section, Haydn reinforces the dominant and uses a half step ascending scale with a fermata.

The Coda starts from m. 298 by using theme I and adding more notes. The whole Coda emphasizes the dominant and tonic chords. Haydn utilizes a lot of unstable harmonies and modulations in the middle of this movement. The terminative ending in both the orchestra and the solo is like a strong restatement of the key of this movement.

Figure 6 (ms. 252-253)



Performance Challenges

The last movement starts with both the strings and the solo. It begins with a quarter note followed by a four sixteenth-note group. The performer should not accent the second beat. From m. 26, Haydn adds ornamentation that should be emphasized and must stand out with a vivid and sharp character. From ms. 122-149, Haydn uses sixteenth-notes as accompaniment for an extended time. The harmonic rhythm is two measures long, and the implied harmony is highlighted by the orchestra. For the long section upon this figure, the performer must plan the dynamics well creating a shape based upon the harmonic changes.

From m. 150, Haydn adds trills to the musical line. This melody has to be played with a robust character. There is an accent on each note; however, a shape still needs to be present.

For the fast section at m. 214, the performer needs to clearly shape the melody over the rapid Alberti bass accompaniment.

CHAPTER III

Beethoven Sonata Opus 26 in A-flat Major

Biography

Ludwig van Beethoven, a German composer and pianist, was born in Bonn on December 17th, 1770, and died on March 26th, 1827. He was baptized upon birth.

Beethoven came from a musical family. His grandfather, Lodewijk van Beethoven, worked at a court as a bass singer and then music director in his later years; his father, Johann van Beethoven, played piano and violin, and gave lessons to support his family.

Johann also suffered from alcoholism, especially after his wife, Maria died.

Beethoven's mother, Maria Magdalena Keverich, born on December 19th, 1746, married Johann in 1767 and died on July 17th, 1787. She was a gentle, moralistic, and kind woman. Beethoven received a lot support from his mother. He referred to her not only as a mother but also as his "best friend."

Beethoven received his early musical training from his family. Beethoven's first music teacher was his father who was a harsh instructor. Beethoven's father wanted to train Beethoven to be a child prodigy, a new Mozart, therefore, he taught Beethoven

day and night and forced him to practice a lot. Although his father was a musician, his musical abilities were limited. Beethoven had other teachers: Gilles van den Eeden, who was an organist in the court, and Tobias Friedrich Pfeiffer, a family friend who gave Beethoven piano lessons. Without a doubt, Beethoven was gifted and talented, and these qualities were evident from a young age. His first performance was given at age eight in Cologne.²⁴

In 1787, Prince Maximilian Franz noticed Beethoven's talent in music and sent him to Vienna to further his musical education. Finally, Beethoven met Mozart in Vienna, where he received praise from the master. Later in the same year, Beethoven returned to Bonn because his mother was dying. She was the only person from his family who had a strong and loving relationship with Beethoven. Five years after she died, in 1792, Beethoven went back to Vienna and with Prince Elector's help, continued his musical education. In Vienna, Beethoven took lessons from Haydn, Albrechtsberger and Salieri. At that time, his musical talent was presented to the Viennese musicians, especially his virtuosity and his ability to improvise at the piano.

In 1793, Beethoven had established a reputation as a piano virtuoso and improviser in the salons of the nobility. Beethoven did not pay much attention to his composing, but rather continued to study and perform regularly. Beethoven composed the trios for piano in 1795 and called them, Op. 1.

²⁴ Joseph Schmidt-Gorg and Hans Schmidt, *Ludwig Van Beethoven: Bicentennial Edition, 1770-1970*. (Bonn: Beethoven-Archiv, 1970), p.10.

In 1799, Beethoven began to notice his hearing was gradually fading²⁵. He did not tell anyone about this situation and still focused on his musical compositions even though it was difficult for him to hear because of a “ringing” in his ears. In 1800, Beethoven presented his first symphony (Op. 21), at the Royal Imperial Theater in Vienna. The concert was huge success. During that time, he also composed his piano concerto no. 1 in C major (Op. 15), and the piano sonata “Pathetique” in C minor (Op. 13).

In 1802, Beethoven completed his second symphony in D major (Op. 36) and fifteen variations and fugue for piano in E-flat major called “Eroica” (Op. 35). In the same year, Beethoven wrote the famous letter known as the “Heiligenstadt Testament,” which was an unsent letter written by Beethoven to his brothers at Heiligenstadt. In this letter, Beethoven wrote about his deafness and hinted at suicide. Despite his depths of depression bordering on despair, he increased his productivity, offering defiance in the face of the cruelest fate to befall a musician.

After 1812, Beethoven’s productivity declined. His guarantor, Kinsky, died in the same year, and therefore Beethoven’s financial situation also declined. Beethoven’s hearing continued to worsen and he was diagnosed as deaf. All of these events contributed to his anguish which presented itself in his compositions. The main works of this period are the Missa Solemnis, the last sonata, Op. 111, the late string quartets, Op. 127, 131 and 135, and one of his most famous late works, the Ninth Symphony Op. 125.

²⁵ Alexander Wheelock Thayer, and Henry Edward Krehbille, *Thayer’s Life of Beethoven*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

Beethoven opened people's ears to music. His sound, color, manipulation of structure, and creation of new musical form and style, profoundly influenced such musicians as Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Mahler, and Dvorak.

Beethoven's Early Period Style

In Beethoven's early period (1780-1802), his musical compositions contained classical characteristics, and he used Haydn and Mozart as models. He wrote many solo piano pieces and started to compose his famous succession of piano sonatas.

Beethoven's early period sonatas were mostly similar to the classical sonata structure; however, there are examples of experimentation within the structure. For example, Beethoven changed the order of the piano sonata's movements and experimented with the traditional weights of the specific movements. This phenomenon is demonstrated in sonata Op. 26.

Piano Sonata in A-Flat Major, Op. 26

Piano Sonata Opus 26 was composed in 1800-1801 and published on March 3rd, 1802, by Cappi of Vienna. Beethoven dedicated this sonata to Prince Karl von Lichnowsky, who had been his patron since 1792. Sonata Op. 26 is a wonderful sample that reflects a great advance in Beethoven's development in 1801. Beethoven did not use the traditional order of sonata movements for its four movements. The four movements of Op. 26 are Andante con Variation, Scherzo, Marcia Funebre *sulla morte d'un Eroe*, and Allegro. There is no sonata-allegro form in its four movements, and Beethoven innovatively used a funeral march for one of the movements.

First Movement

The first movement is an Andante con Variazioni 3/8 meter which consists of an extended theme and five variations. It is a relatively slow movement with a warm and gentle character. In the theme (ms. 1-34), the melody is in three sections: A -A¹-B-A². Section A is a sixteen measure parallel period. Section B (ms. 17-26), is ten bars in length with new material. It starts with a two measures motive followed by a downward step sequence from B-flat to A-flat major. At the end of section B, Beethoven uses an E-flat major chord (the dominant of A^b major), to return to the original key and the theme.

To successfully execute the theme, a long line must be sustained over carefully crafted articulation. The theme should be played as a long melodic line with grace, seriousness and warmth.

Variation I (ms. 35-68), is in A-flat major, 3/8 meter. It has the same structure as the theme: three main sections. This variation starts with an E flat as an upbeat which is tied to a thirty-second note E-flat downbeat, followed by a group of three thirty-second notes (see Figure 1). Due to this phenomenon, the accent is on the second beat. In ms. 37-38 (see Figure 2), and 45-46, the melody resolves through the middle voice. In section B, Beethoven uses exactly the same material as the B section of the theme. The only difference is that the left hand part is divided into thirty-second notes. The whole variation maintains a classical composure. Its melody is simple as the main melodic content is made up of the connecting Figure 1 motive.

Figure 1

Figure 2



Performance Challenges

In ms. 36-37, as Beethoven marked (Figure 1), it is difficult to play the portato lyrically within the melodic line. The performer should stay on the keys as much as possible. In addition, the performer should be careful with the pedal, especially at the beginning of the variation, because the thirty-second notes need to be clear and lyrical. It is possibly better to play those passages without pedal.

Variation II (ms. 69-102), is pleasant and light-hearted requiring more technical skill. The melody is set mostly in sixteenth note octaves in the bass line while the upper voices contain an off-beat chordal accompaniment in thirty-second notes. The dynamics are very important for this variation as they clearly mark the theme.

Performance Challenges

The performer must clearly delineate the articulation of the theme played by the left hand, while keeping the right hand's off-beat thirty-second notes light and supportive in an accompanying sense. There are not many indications in the URTEXT version of the Beethoven piano sonatas; however, Moscheles²⁶ suggests that there should be a crescendo in m. 94 followed by a piano in m. 95 which are taken from the

²⁶ Moschele (1794-1870), who was a Bohemian composer and piano virtuoso.

theme.²⁷ Czerny, says that a crescendo in the last phrase, from ms. 95-102, should approach a forte, and the last four measures should be played lightly staccato and very softly.²⁸

Variation III is in A-flat minor (the parallel minor). Because of the minor color, this variation evokes a heavier and more serious emotion. Like variation I, this variation also starts with an upbeat and emphasizes the downbeats which seems to demand a *tenuto* effect (in the right hand), from the initial syncopation. This variation also seems far away from the original theme not only in its material but also in its character. In section B, the music becomes more fascinating and exciting at m. 123. This is because the first 4 measures are very lyrical, and after that the *sf* on the up beats, the slur marking and the staccatos bring the music to this variation's climax.

Performance Challenges

In this variation, the performer needs to create long lines over the syncopated off beat notes in the right hand, and the various other articulations evident.

Variation IV returns to A-flat major. The character is simple and pleasant. The variation contains a syncopated figure, slurs, staccato marks and a repeated sixteenth note accompaniment. In addition, the melody moves back and forth between ranges to create a dialogue. These elements create a bright, pleasing and humorous character.

Performance Challenges

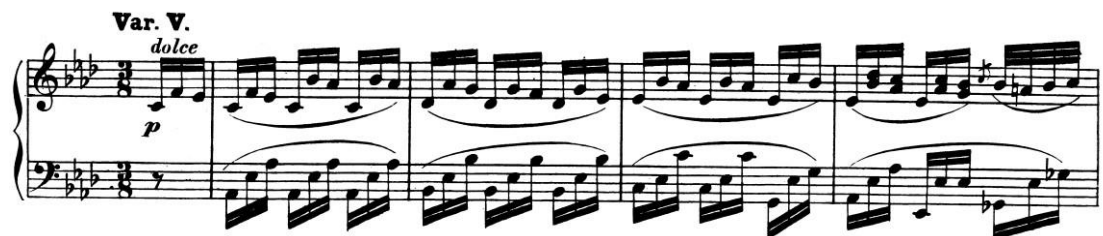
²⁷ Kenneth O. Drake. *The Sonatas of Beethoven: As He Played and Taught Them*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).

²⁸ Carl Czerny. *Pianoforte-Schule*, Vol IV, p.47.

The staccatos in the left hand should be played as rhythmically clear and as detached as possible, as they support the melody in the right hand. The most difficult part in this variation are the frequently jumps. It is difficult for the performer to control their sound quality. In ms. 162, there is a descending scale in the left hand. It must be played smoothly and shaped convincingly.

For the last variation, V, although the composer uses a totally different model and the form changes, it still plays a conclusive role. Section A is not a parallel period. The variation starts with sixteenth note triplets in both hands. The interesting thing is that Beethoven hides the theme in the final note of each triplet (see Figure 4). From the second phrase, the real theme occurs on the first note (and sometimes the third note, as well) of the thirty-second note subdivisions. Section B is still ten measures in length, and Beethoven adds the syncopation figure in the melody. The body of this variation leads us to the repeated E flats (ms. 204), the dominant tone of A-flat major, which introduces the Coda, and also serves as a harmonic accompanying line repeated to the end. The Coda introduces a new melody and only contains the dominant chord and tonic chord which make this closing section really conclusive and stable.

Figure 4



Performance Challenges

The most significant performance issues of this variation include playing the notes evenly and clearly and maintaining a steady beat while switching between triplet sixteenth notes and the thirty-second note patterns. Additionally there are four against three note patterns to accurately execute (see the last measure of Figure 4).

Voicing the melody when it appears in the alto voice can also pose challenges.

Another important aspect of this movement is planning the tempos. Usually the tempo is the element which binds a musical piece together. For this movement, although Beethoven marked a 3/8 meter for the theme and each variation, there is not one unifying tempo. Some famous pianists who have played this sonata have different opinions regarding the tempos. For example, Czerny thought the theme and first variation should have the same tempo of ♩ = 76. Schnabel believed the theme and first variation should be at ♩ = 63-66.²⁹ In general, the tempo for the whole movement is much slower, nevertheless, both Variation II and IV are relatively faster than variations I, III, and V.

Second Movement

This movement is a scherzo in A-flat major and in 3/4 meter. The melody is presented vividly and the character is energetic. The tempo suggestion is Allegro molto, much faster than the first movement. The structure consists of a scherzo in two parts with a trio. It is interesting to note that, unusually, Beethoven wrote *La prima*

²⁹ Kenneth O. Drake. *The Sonatas of Beethoven: As He Played and Taught Them*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).

parte senza repetizione, the first section of the Scherzo is not repeated (Figure 5). However, the second section of the Scherzo is repeated as is the two sections of the Trio. The form is compound ternary form. The first part is sixteen measures long and comprises four phrases (Figure 5). The first phrase which has a dominant function starts with a *piano* dynamic but it quickly changes to *sforzando* on the first beat of the first measure. The second phrase starts with the same melody but moves a perfect 4th higher and ends with a perfect authentic cadence in A-flat major in m. 8. The melody of phrases three and four are the same as phrase one and two but more elaborate with the addition of quarter notes in the voices.

Figure 5



Section B (ms. 17-67), contains two parts. The first part is 12 measures long and starts with three groups of sequence which have a wide dynamic change (Figure 6). Beethoven uses a long phrase passage (ms. 29-44) which stays in the dominant function of F, and the dynamic gets softer to elicit the key change. Suddenly, from ms. 45-67, the model changes to running scaled eighth notes and the music is more lyrical than before. This part starts with a sequence phrase in F minor and moves to A-flat major. In m. 53, the material of the two hands reverse roles and the dynamic increases.

The *sforzandos* keeps appearing, and there is a *crescendo* to *fortissimo* at the end of this section.

The Trio (ms. 68-91), also comprises two parts. The first part has only one period (ms. 68-75), in A-flat major with a repeat. The second period in A-flat major (ms. 76-91), is twice as long and has a repeat mark as well; however, this time its ending is different (Figure 6). The dynamic of this second period starts at *piano*. From m. 84, there is a *crescendo* which creates intensity and then returns to *piano* to create the shape. The last four measures (ms. 92-95), present the motive from the beginning of this movement as a transitional passage (Figure 7). The pianist repeats the scherzo part until *Fine* (the end of B section).

Figure 6



Figure 7



Performance Challenges

In the first sixteen measures (even though each phrase has a *sforzando* marking), the soft and light character must be preserved. The performer should also clearly show the differences between *legato* and *staccato*. In section B (ms. 17-67), the dynamics change more frequently than before (Figure 6). These markings need to be carefully observed and projected. In m. 45, the right hand has running eighth notes and the left hand has the main melody; at m.53 both hands switch roles. The performer must play and shape the running notes clearly, being careful not to cover the main melody in the

Figure 7



Third Movement

³⁰ Ex: The Eroica symphony

as the beginning, until m. 25, at which time he changes the tonality to A-flat minor to end this section.

Figure 8



Section B is very short, only eight measures long and in A-flat major. The melody and harmony are also very simple, only three chords are used, and each group of four measures has a repeat sign. In this section the dynamics change dramatically in a short time (Figure 10).

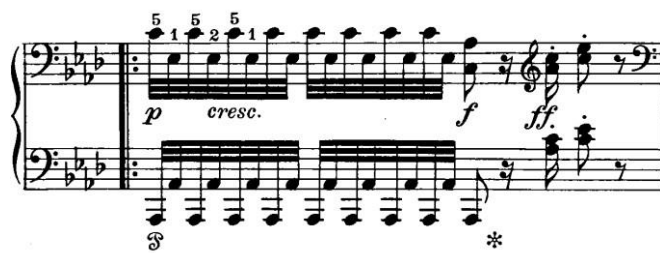
From ms. 39-68 is Section A¹ which is very similar to Section A, with just a slight difference in the chordal writing at the end. The Coda starts from the last beat of m.68 and ends with a *pianissimo* dynamic. It is as though the funeral is over and people are departing with complicated emotions.

In the coda, Beethoven has the melodies of the upper voices move in opposite direction to the tenor. The bass A flat emphasizes the home tonality.

Performance Challenges

In the beginning, the continuous chords (Figure 8), set the heavy pace and serious mood. The melody is set in the middle voices. The performer needs to carefully voice the moving melodic line. In m. 5, the *crescendo* starts from the second beat; it should

be played distinctly. In ms. 9-10, the *crescendo* is followed by a *sforzando*, those dynamics and harmonic changes provide the mood with more grandeur and indignation which the performer must project. In m. 19, the *staccato* double notes should be played sharply and with power, and in the following measure, the group of sixteenth notes should be played profoundly returning the music to a sad mood. In m. 23, the trill is powerful and should imitate timpani. From m. 26 there is the climax of section A, and the octave bass line should sound like horns that intensify and excite the mood. Figure. 9



In section B, the tremolo notes need to be played with crescendo dynamics, and sound like timpani (Figure. 9). The following *fortissimo* chords need to be played dramatically.

The Coda maintains an A flat in the bass, and the counterpoint in the upper voices should be played clearly. The decrescendo should be paced carefully. The pianist must be careful with the rest on the second beat of the last measures and keep the tempo.

Fourth Movement

Movement four is very different from the preceding three movements. This movement has a “perpetuum mobile” pattern with running sixteenth notes. This movement presents a vivid and exciting character. After the *Marcia funebre*

movement, this light movement expresses optimistic thinking; we need to live with a sense of joy in life, even with the inevitability of death and the fact that unfortunate things can happen.

This last movement is in a rondo-sonata form with an Allegro marking. The sections are clear to identify, but the structure is more complicated. This movement has seven sections (A-B-A-C-A-B¹-Coda) and can also fit into a sonata structure. Section A is in A-flat major, and comprises four materials: a, b, c, d (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Section B starts from the second beat in m. 28. This section demonstrates the sonata principle as it starts with the same material as *a* but in the dominant key. (This is like a secondary tonal area of the exposition.) There is a long pedal E flat in ms. 48-52 which serves as a dominant returning to A-flat major in the following section. Section C, which is like a developmental part of sonata form, starts from the second beat of m. 81. This section still maintains the same material as *a*; however, it moves in the opposite direction and the bass line uses a repeated chordal pattern as

accompaniment. This section starts in C minor. Because the phrases are short and end in different keys (which follow the circle of fifths progression), the feeling is unstable.

The next two sections, A and B¹, seem to fit the recapitulation part of sonata form. Section A (ms. 101-128), repeats the first theme exactly. Section B¹ (ms. 129-154), is similar to section B but in the tonic key. This follows the standard recapitulation guidelines. Additionally, Beethoven adds six more measures (133-139), which remain in the home key.

The Coda lasts 15 measures, from m. 155 until the end. The bass line is a pedal A flat and the melody emphasizes A-flat major. It is unusual that the piece ends in a *decrescendo* dynamic. This finale does not have a strong ending which leaves us with a sense of an unknown future.

Performance Challenges

Within this movement, the most challenging part is to play the groups of sixteenth notes evenly, softly, and with proper shaping. The performer also needs to pay attention to the rhythm, generally feeling one beat per measure. In section B, the main challenge is the off-beat octaves. The sense of the beats is easily interrupted by these off-beat octaves. From ms. 42-47, there are three groups of descending running notes in different rhythmic divisions. These notes should be played rhythmically accurate and the *forte* dynamic should be maintained producing a strong contrast with the sudden *piano* in m. 48. The first two groups end with a deceptive cadence, the third group ends with a perfect authentic cadence. The performer must project these

harmonic differences playing the third group with a strong concluding sense. In section C, the dynamics are the challenge for the performer. The first phrase of section C has a long *crescendo* with two *forte* chords. Another spot where the performer should be careful is with the chords in ms. 136-138. Those chords have *sforzando* marking, but they need to be played vividly with charm, and not too heavily. In the Coda, the left hand has a pedal A flat note; the performer should be careful to not let the right hand totally cover this A flat. In the right hand, the performer should pay attention to the dynamics. In ms. 155-156 and 159-160, Beethoven adds an upper voice. The G and F should be clearly projected and carefully resolved.

CHAPTER IV

Brahms Scherzo in E-flat Major Opus 4

Biography

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), German composer and pianist, was born in Hamburg. He spent much of his working life in Vienna. Brahms wrote piano works, choral compositions, chamber music, concerti and symphonies. His music combines both classical and romantic characteristics, having a profound influence in Europe.

Brahms was discerned as a classical style composer because much of his music maintains a conservative attitude. Although he lived during the Romantic period, he opposed the music of Liszt and Wagner and was opposed to the Neo-German school which advocated extra-musical subjects, novel forms, and new musical ideas.

Brahms' early music training came from his father, Johann Jakob Brahms, who was intoxicated with music and was himself seeking a career as a town musician. He was proficient in several instruments including piano, therefore, music was introduced to Brahms at an early age through his father. Brahms took piano lessons from the age of seven years old. At the same time, he started taking violin lessons.

By the time he was a teenager, Brahms was known as a performer and gave several concerts. He also conducted a church choir and taught piano lessons to support himself.

In 1853, Brahms met Robert Schumann. The two quickly grew close, and simultaneously, Brahms' works started to be published for the public. Brahms was widely influenced by Schumann and favored the traditional large form, such as the sonata and the variation set. Like Schumann, Brahms composed three piano sonatas. These three works were written almost at the same time and published between 1853 and 1854. These sonatas followed the classical style: traditional movements and order of movements, virtuosity, and symphonic character.

Brahms's first visit to Vienna was in 1862, and he spent thirty-five years there. In the early years of living in Vienna, Brahms composed many variation sets. During this period, (in 1858), Brahms also composed his first piano concerto (Opus 15, in D minor). In 1859, Brahms was appointed conductor to a women's choir in Hamburg, and in 1863, he became the conductor of the Wiener Singakademie³¹ in Vienna.

Another group of Brahms's piano works are the character pieces. Unlike his sonatas and variations, Brahms composed the character pieces as smaller forms. Brahms wrote character pieces since his early period; however, he stopped writing in this genre for a time (from 1880-1890). He immersed himself in this genre, once again, in his late period.³²

³¹ The Wiener Singakademie was the first mixed choir in Vienna, Austria, the Wiener Singakademie was founded in 1858.

³² F. E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History*, (Cambridge: Amadeus Press, LLC. 1995), p. 236.

Brahms remained in Vienna for the rest of his life. During this period, he traveled to many cities and gave concerts where he mostly conducted or performed his own works. In March 1897, Brahms gave his last performance in Vienna. He died a month later, on April 3, 1897, due to complications of cancer.

Scherzo

A scherzo is an Italian word meaning jest. It describes a musical form with a rapid triple time. In western music, it is a genre of music, frequently used as the third movement of a four-movement symphony or sonata. The scherzo was composed since the early 17th century as a vocal or instrumental piece, such as the *Scherzi musicali* (1607), of Claudio Monteverdi. From the 18th to the 19th century, the scherzo replaced the minuet movement in symphonies, sonatas and string quartets (This was an innovation of Beethoven, who replaced the minuet movement with the scherzo, in his piano sonatas.) In the nineteenth century, the scherzo was not only treated as an independent composition but also as a larger, virtuoso piece with darker moods,³³ such as, the Scherzos of Chopin. Typically, a scherzo is in ternary or rondo form and contains contrasting parts; the “B” section is a trio, and a scherzo may have more than one trio if it fits a rondo form.

The Scherzo Op. 4 in E-flat Minor

The Scherzo Op. 4 in E-flat minor was written in 1851 and published three years later. It is Brahms’ earliest surviving work³⁴. This scherzo remains in a typical scherzo

³³ “scherzo,” *Britannica*, accessed March 8, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/art/scherzo>.

³⁴ According to Music for Piano by F.E. Kirby, Op. 1, 2, and 3 were composed later than Op.4, but published before this Scherzo.

rhythm, 3/4 meter, and is in fast triple time. The form is a rondo form with two episodes: Trio I and Trio II. The structure of the scherzo is A - Trio I - A (without repeat of the first part) - Trio II - A¹.

Part A comprises three main sections. The theme A is thirty-two measures long with a repeat mark, and the theme starts with a four-note group motive (Figure 1, Material A). At the beginning, Brahms indicates: *Rasch und ferig*, meaning fast and fiery. The rapid tempo with the four-note motive and long rests, and the descending staccato melody that follows, makes the atmosphere exciting. Section A is somewhat unstable because the whole section is based on the dominant chord (B-flat major), and never has an authentic cadence in the tonic key. From m. 34, Material B starts with a three quarter note motive. Section B starts from m. 46, and the E-flat minor tonality first shows up clearly. In the bass clef of ms. 46-50, Brahms uses a chordal melody to create a beautiful line (Figure 1, Material B). Section A¹ starts from m. 81, it repeats section A; however, it is slightly different in the beginning and the whole section is longer.

Figure 1

Material A



(Material C, Figure 2), in a chordal texture and the melody is more lyrical.

Harmonically, this trio is an unstable section. Material D (Figure 2), appears in m. 190.

Brahms uses a very simple melodic fragment for this phrase, one that is very lyrical and graceful. The left hand imitates the right hand. From ms. 212-240, the music is developed upon Material D. Ms. 246-290, is similar to ms. 162-207, but the melody moves up a perfect 4th. Brahms places long rests at the end of this section and marks a Da capo repeat sign (Figure 3).

Figure 2

Material C



Material D



Figure 3



Trio II is more expressive than Trio I. It also has two sections. The first section contains two contrasting emotions. It starts with Material E (Figure 4), which is a succession of chords in a *forte* dynamic. The first phrase is eight measures long, and the second phrase is similar to the first but moves one step higher. This intensifies the emotion. From m. 319, Brahms relieves the intense emotion by writing a simple and lyrical melody which is in stark contrast with the first section. From m. 339, Brahms

repeats material E but varies it by adding octaves in some places (Ex: ms. 343-346 and ms. 354-357).

Figure 4

Material E



At m. 381, the second section starts with Material F (Figure 5), presenting a totally new musical idea. Material F starts with a two-voice counterpoint in B major. Brahms uses canonic imitation: the right hand plays first and the left hand repeats it two measures later. In m. 411, material E appears again but developed. In m. 461, Brahms changes the key signature. He adds Material A at the end of this section to make the music smoothly return to E-flat minor for Part A¹.

Figure 5


Material F



Part A¹ extends from m. 463 until the end. It is almost the same as Part A but with a different ending. This scherzo ends in an extremely strong and exciting way. The dynamic stays in fortissimo with occasional *sff* markings. In order to make a spectacular effect, Brahms inserts long rests in between the final chords. That increases the intensity of the atmosphere.

Performance Issues

The first main challenge in this piece is the rhythm. At the very beginning, the four-note motive must be correctly executed, and with the proper emphasis on the

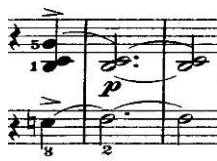
second note, as the piece is in 3/4 time.  In

addition, the tempo fluctuates at times. Some of these fluctuations are according to

Brahms' indications, such as: *poco a poco più sostenuto - poco a poco in tempo* in ms.

70-80. The performer can hold back the tempo slightly in the beginning of the phrase,

and then gradually regain it between ms.77-79. Another example is in ms. 161-162



the accented pick up can be slightly stretched.

The variety of dynamics and need for rapid changes of dynamics also poses a technical issue for the performer. Brahms uses many dynamic markings in this piece.

Some of them are really difficult to play. For example, the *crescendo* and then sudden *piano* mark in Figure 6. After the crescendo, the dynamics suddenly change to *piano*.

It is a challenge for the performer to control the sound turning to soft immediately.

Another example is at ms. 274-285 (Figure 7). The performer needs to think about the shape and inherent dynamics for each hand (as well as each hand's contrasting articulations and characters).

Figure 6



Figure 7



Other technical feats in this piece include: octave playing, fast running passages, wide leaps, and chordal playing.

For the final chords of this piece (Figure 8) ms. 621-628, the dynamic sustains in fortissimo. It is very difficult for the performer to play those chords, with their wide leaps, loud enough, in tempo, without extra notes or wrong notes. The performer must practice slowly and feel the distance between the chords, even without looking at the keyboard, and then speed up gradually.

Figure 8 (ms. 621-628)



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