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GRADUATE PIANO RECITAL

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

Liping Xia

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

November, 2016

GRADUATE PIANO RECITAL
ATTENDING PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

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GRADUATE PIANO RECITAL

An Abstract of the Thesis by
Liping Xia

The Graduate Piano Recital is the main recital of the Master's degree which is one hour in length. The repertoire for my graduate piano recital includes: *Estampes* (*Pagodes*, *La soirée dans Grenade* and *Jardins sous la pluie*), by Claude Debussy; *Variationen über das Motiv von Bach S.180* by Franz Liszt; and *Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53* by Ludwig Van Beethoven. This thesis will discuss the biography and musical style of each composer, the structure and analysis of each piece, and provide performance suggestions for each piece as well.

Pittsburg State University
Pittsburg, Kansas

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Masters Recital

Liping Xia, Piano

Tuesday, April 12, 2016
McCray Recital Hall
5:30 p.m.

Program

Piano Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53.....Ludwig van
Beethoven

I. *Allegro con brio*
(1770 – 1827)

II. *Introduzione: Adagio molto*

III. *Rondo. Allegretto moderato—Prestissimo*

Intermission

Estampes L. 100.....Claude
Debussy

I. *Pagodes*
(1862 – 1918)

II. *La soirée dans Grenade*

III. *Jardins sous la pluie*

Variationen über das Motiv von Bach, S.
180.....Franz Liszt

(1811 – 1886)

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

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

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CHAPTER I

CLAUDE DEBUSSY: *ESTAMPES L. 100*

Biography

Claude-Achille Debussy, a French composer, was born in Saint-Germain-en-Laye in France on August 22, 1862 and died on March 25, 1918. He was made Chevalier of the Legion of Honour in his native France in 1903. Even though he disliked people using impressionist music to define his compositions, he was considered one of the most outstanding impressionist composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹

Debussy was the oldest child in his family, his father was owner of a china shop and his mother was a seamstress. In 1870, he moved to his aunt's home in Cannes with his mother due to the Franco-Prussian War. In Cannes, he started piano lessons at the age of seven with an Italian violinist. In 1872, at the age of ten, he was admitted to the Paris conservatory where he was a pupil for eleven years and showed his incredible talent in music. He also studied composition, organ and piano with some famous musicians of the Paris Conservatory.²

¹ Roger Nichols, *Oxford Studies of Composers: Debussy*, ed. Colin Mason (London: Oxford University press, Ely House, 1972), 35.

² Ibid, 36.

Debussy was an excellent pianist and brilliant sight reader. In his public performance, he would program pieces composed by Beethoven, Schumann, Weber and Chopin. Aside from being a soloist, he also worked as an accompanist to earn some money. Marie-Blanche Vasnier, a singer whom Debussy accompanied, greatly influenced him. As well, they had an eight-year affair. Debussy received emotional and professional support from Marie-Blanche Vasnier and her husband.³

In 1884, Debussy's composition *L'enfant prodigue* won the 1884 Prix de Rome. As a result, Debussy was granted the opportunity to further his studies with a scholarship to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Italy, however, he returned to Paris after two years as he experienced depression and was unable to compose for some time.

In 1887, The Exposition Universelle which was held in Paris, introduced Debussy to Javanese gamelan music. He was attracted to the gamelan scales, rhythms, melodies and textures. Debussy applied these new musical ideas to his work, such as, *Pagodes*.⁴

In 1895, Debussy composed the seminal opera "*Pelléas et Mélisande*," however, the first performance did not occur until 1902. He received extensive recognition from this piece. His compositions in his later period were not only for orchestra such as *La Mer* ("The Sea"; 1905) and *Ibéria* (1908), but also for solo piano, such as, *Images*

³ Ibid, 37.

⁴ Ibid, 33.

(1905) and *the Children's Corner Suite* (1908).⁵

Debussy devoted his life to music, he spent all his time composing and performing his own music internationally. At the same time, he was also a musical critic. Cancer cut his life off when he was only fifty-five years old. He died in Paris in 1918.

Debussy's Musical Style

Debussy presented a new tonal concept and expressed these musical ideas mysteriously in his compositions. He played a crucial role in the transition from the late romantic musical style to the 20th-century musical style. It was him that led music to enter a new period. In his compositions, there is much use of non-traditional scales and chromatic ideas. Composers who were influenced by him followed his innovative ideas while composing their own music.⁶

Early works

From the 1890s, Debussy seemed like other young composers, Wagner's music influenced him a lot. He frequently participated at the gatherings at Stéphane Mallarmé's Symbolist, where Wagnerian discussion dominated. Similar to Wagner, Debussy liked to use dissonance and chromaticism in his music. Unlike Wagner, Debussy's compositions were not as lengthy and Debussy preferred smaller and more

⁵ Ibid, 34.

⁶ Edward Locksdeler, *The Great Composers Series: Debussy*, ed. Eric Blom and J.A. Westrup (United States of America: Collier Books, 1936), 144-146.

accessible forms.⁷ One such example of a smaller form is one of his most famous compositions, *Clair de lune*, from *Suite Bergamasque* (1890). Debussy was affected by poets and painters, the most famous of his works is *La Damoiselle élue* (1888) which was based on a poem—"The Blessed Damozel," written by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Debussy was devoted to string quartet composition. He wrote the *String Quartet in G minor* (1893), which was a successful attempt for his later more daring harmonic exploration. In this piece, he used the Phrygian mode and less standard scales to establish a sense of floating, ethereal harmony. In this piece, Debussy also tried to break away from the traditional form, A-B-A, in composing, which had been a dominant form since Haydn.⁸

Middle works

Debussy's middle works included the three *Nocturnes* (1899), which were inspired by impressionist paintings (and also entitled "Nocturnes" by James Abbott McNeill Whistler), *Nuages*, where Debussy used veiled harmony and texture, and *Sirènes*, which made use of whole-tones.⁹

One of the most famous works of Debussy in this period is the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, which took him ten years to complete. In this opera, the atmosphere is simple and unique, which is one of distance, alienation, and mystery, as evoked by the

⁷ Ibid, 144-146.

⁸ Ibid, 148.

⁹ Roger Nichols, 34-35.

modality and whole-tone harmony of the opening bars.¹⁰

Debussy wrote many pieces for piano in this middle period. *Pour le piano* (1901) uses rich harmonies and textures. His first volume of *Images pour piano* (1904–1905) combines harmonic innovation with poetic suggestion through the use of “liquid sonorities and floating chords,¹¹ recalling a dark mood during its powerful moments.”¹² The evocative *Estampes* for piano (1903) gives impressions of exotic locations. Debussy came into contact with Javanese gamelan music during the 1889 Paris Exposition Universelle. *Pagodes* is a directly inspired result as Debussy makes extensive use of the pentatonic scale.

Late works

In this period, Debussy preferred to use dissonance in his music and whole tone scales dominate. Debussy used many irregular and fragmented forms, for example, in the *Études* (1915) which comprise the last two volumes of works for the piano. At the same time, Debussy continued to make use of floating chords.

Analysis of *Estampes* L. 100

Debussy finished the composition, *Estampes*, in July 1903. It was published immediately. *Estampes* contains three pieces: *Pagodes*, *La soirée dans Grenade* and *Jardins sous la pluie*. The acclaimed pianist, Ricardo Viñes first performed it at

¹⁰ Ibid, 35.

¹¹ Chordal progressions that avoided the use of formal resolution.

¹² Edward Locksdelser, 144-146.

the Société Nationale on January 9th, 1904.

At the Paris International Exposition of 1889, Debussy was impressed by the performances of a Javanese gamelan ensemble. Following, Debussy applied Javanese musical characteristics in his works, for example *Estampes*.

Estampes is full of diverse color, descriptive titles and intense organization. Debussy wrote precise instructions in the score for all musical matters, such as, tempo, dynamics, etc. Each of the three pieces is regarded as a perfect picture from an album or a print on a wall. *Estampes* won the affection and compliments of many people when they heard Debussy's "musical painting," for the first time. This exploration of range of color and resonance which appeared in his piano music for the first time, looked ahead to the Twentieth century and towards the music of Olivier Messiaen.¹³

Pagodes

Pagodes can also be referred to as Pagodas. *Pagodes* is an imaginary Asian tower that Debussy saw in his mind as he heard the Javanese music at the Paris Exposition. Debussy never saw real pagodas, he didn't even know if they existed. They, however, represented the music that he heard. In *Pagodes*, even though the structure and the general harmony of this piece is in a European style, Debussy imitated the gamelan experience by using the five-note Chinese scale and the extended pentatonic chord.¹⁴

¹³ Paul Roberts, *Claude Debussy* (New York: Phaidon Press Inc, 2008), 161.

¹⁴ E. Robert Schmitz, *The Piano Works of Claude Debussy* (New York: Dover Publications, 1950), 85.

Pagodes has three main themes: the first theme is the pentatonic melody that appears in m. 3, the second theme is the melody in octaves in m. 11, and the last theme appears in m. 33 (Example 1).

The image displays three musical excerpts from Debussy's *Pagodes*. The first excerpt (top left) shows the first theme, a pentatonic melody in the right hand, marked 'a Tempo' and 'Rit.', with a 'Gong-like' label pointing to the bass line. The second excerpt (top right) shows the second theme, a melody in octaves in the middle voice, marked 'p', with a 'Bell-like' label pointing to the upper voice. The third excerpt (bottom) shows the third theme, a single melody in the right hand, marked 'Sans lenteur' and 'p', with a 'Gong-like' label pointing to the bass line.

Example 1

The first theme is repeated and restated with variation throughout the piece. Its running notes are like water. At its first appearance, Debussy emphasized the accompanying dissonant chords by placing them on the off-beats. Often, the long notes in the bass line are gong-like.

In m. 11, the second theme appears in the middle voice. The variation of the first theme in the upper voices imitate bells (Example 1). In m. 19, the second theme crosses between two hands. The mood is solemn which provides the listener a picture of the high tower.

The third theme (m. 33), is a single melody with accompanying repeated double notes. The texture is changed by using fuller chords in the left hand and a variation of

the first theme in the right hand. Compared with the first two themes, the third theme is more exciting because the right hand has the running notes with the fuller chords in the left hand. In m. 44, fuller chords and the *ff* dynamic bring the third theme to a climax.

Performance Suggestions

Color is the most important element in this piece. Using the damper pedal and soft pedal appropriately will help the performer create the right texture, as the damper pedal will help produce the hazy sound. The performer needs to simultaneously bring out the melody clearly.

Debussy adds many tempo marking to help the performer pace this piece and play the rubato appropriately. The performer needs to follow these instructions carefully.


The fast thirty-second notes in the right hand (m. 78 to the end), is a challenge for the performer. These running notes need to be played clearly and softly. In addition, the melody below needs to be shaped carefully. The performer should achieve *ppp* gradually and be careful to maintain the projection of sound.

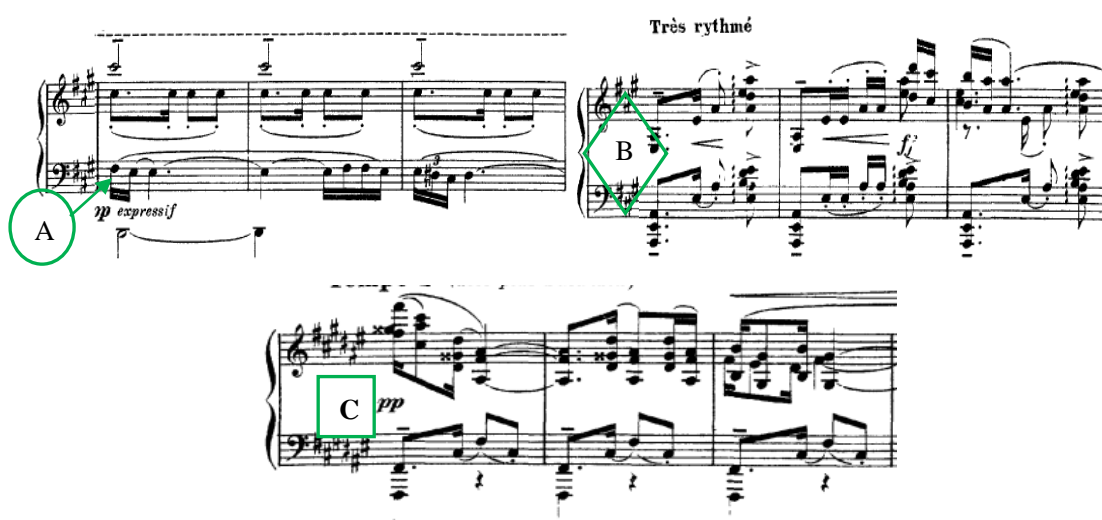
La soirée dans Grenade

Grenade is a city in Spain. Debussy gave the title *La soirée dans Grenade* which means the evening in Granada. Debussy only travelled to Spain once and spent some hours at San Sebastián¹⁵. His experience in Spain helped him compose this movement. Debussy did not borrow the music from Spanish folk song, the scene of Granada

¹⁵ San Sebastián is a coastal city located in the Basque Autonomous Community, Spain. It lies on the coast of the Bay of Biscay, 20 km (12 miles) from the French border.

came from Debussy's imagination. He even said, "If this is not exactly the kind of music they play in Granada, then so much the worse for Granada!"¹⁶

La soirée dans Grenade is in the following form: A-B-C-B'-Coda-A'. There is a habanera dance rhythm () throughout the piece. This piece has three main themes: A (m. 7), B (m. 38) and C (m. 67) (Example 2).



Example 2

Theme A is a single melody which is placed in the tenor. It is the languid Moorish melody. Debussy used the Arabic scale in a descending line in that melody: C#-B#-A-G#-F#-E#-D.¹⁷ In m. 17, there is an interruption with the syncopated figure which sounds like the strumming of a guitar. The same material also appears in m. 29 and m. 92 as interruptions.

The character of theme B (m. 38 and m. 98) has a rich and powerful rhythmic texture, the habanera dance rhythm with the broken chords, makes the music sound vivid. If theme A is the solo dance, theme B will be the group dance.

¹⁶ Paul Roberts, 163.

¹⁷ E. Robert Schmitz, 87.

Theme C (m. 67) reverts back to the primary tempo, Debussy marked “*avec plus d’abandon*” in the score. Debussy uses F# as a tonal center. The rhythm of this new theme is freer than the previous themes. The melody is tender and sinuous. People can imagine their own picture of Spain when they hear this theme.

Aside from some new light and quick passagework, the coda, from m. 109, repeats some fragments of theme A and theme C. While hearing this sublime coda, listeners may recall in their memory the sounds of some previous scenes which appears again as if in a dream.

Performance Suggestions

To play this piece, the most important thing for the performer is to project the Spanish dance rhythms and feel the mood of the night. People can watch videos of live Spanish dance to capture the correct atmosphere and nuance. It may also help the performer pace the piece and play the rubato appropriately.

Dynamics in this piece change frequently. The range of the dynamic is from *ppp* to *ff*. The performer must technically accomplish these contrasts. Sometimes there are sudden contrasts in mood, due to interruption. The performer needs to add the element of surprise to portray these interruptions clearly. The performer also needs to control the habanera dance accompaniment and play it soft enough, as Debussy wrote *ppp* or *pp* in the score.

Jardins sous la pluie

The meaning of *Jardins sous la pluie* is “gardens in the rain.” In this piece,

Debussy portrays the town of Orbec in northwestern France. The climate of Orbec is a temperate marine climate, therefore, it is a humid and rainy place. In *Jardins sous la pluie*, Debussy conveys the scene of light and heavy raindrops, thunder, sunshine, and a rainbow after the rain.

Debussy uses sixteenth note figures where the first note of each group is also a quarter note or eighth note. These “first notes” create a melody and imitate raindrops, sometimes light, and other times more forceful with wind. There are whole tone scales, chromatic lines and major and minor scales utilized throughout the piece. Two French songs are featured in this piece: *Do do, l’enfant do* (“Sleep, Child, Sleep”) and *Nous n’irions plus au bois* (“We’ll not Return to the Woods”).

The piece starts in e minor. The melody of *Do do, l’enfant do* appears in the left hand in m. 27. It is a children’s song. The eighth notes in the left hand sound like raindrops and this part represents the quiet before the thunderstorm as the soft and light raindrops are falling to the ground. In m. 31, the same melody appears again with accents in the lower register and with a *subito f*. We hear the unpredictable weather (Example 3).



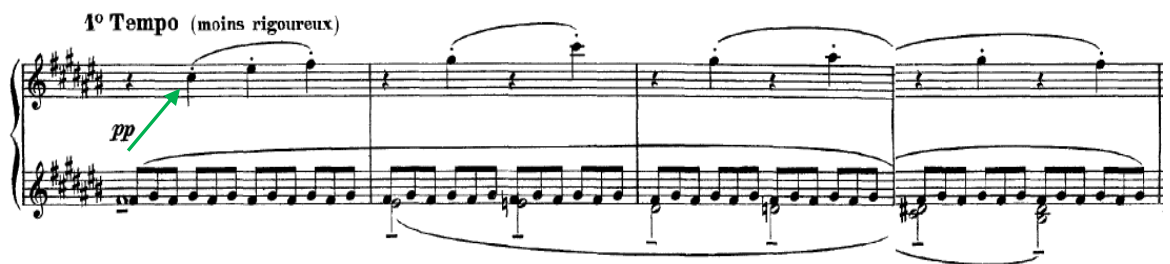
Example 3 *Do do, l’enfant do*

In the middle section (m. 37), between the French songs, the material is windy and the rain is gaining momentum. Debussy changes the texture in the left hand by adding chords to the melody line in m. 37 (Example 4). A picture of dense clouds, darkening sky and strengthening winds is conveyed.



Example 4

The section starting at measures 56-75 is a transition consisting of a whole-toned and chromatic passage.¹⁸ The music softens and calms down in m.75 as the dynamic changes to *pp* for the French song *Nous n'irions plus au bois* (Example 5). In m. 83, there is a whole-toned melody in the left hand which interrupts the second theme. In m. 90, the second theme reappears in the same key. The triplets in the middle voice show the rain and wind calming down. From m. 100, we can see the sky clearing up and people are waiting for the sun to come out.



Example 5 *Nous n'irions plus au bois*

The first theme, in b minor, is presented in m. 112. After a transition section, in m. 126, Debussy uses the arpeggio to imitate the sun coming out. He uses the

¹⁸ Ibid, 91.

fragment of the second theme in B major, and then transposes the fragment to E major.

In m. 136, the bass line of the left hand plays the first theme in g# minor. Next, the second theme appears, followed by a return of the first theme. Finally, the piece ends spectacularly in E major. Compared with the opening key of e minor, E major is now the tonic major. The major key reveals both hope and the sun.

Performance Suggestions

Throughout the piece, there are running sixteenth notes in the right hand, which, for the most part, are broken chords. The performer needs to play these sixteenth notes with a precise sound which is even and soft. The first note of each sixteenth-note group is simultaneously a stemmed eighth note which contains a melody and needs to be shaped properly. These eighth-note melodic passages also must imitate the sound of raindrops.

There are many modulations in this piece and Debussy utilizes different keys to portray the different moods within the movement. The performer must search for and project the appropriate color for these different moods.

There are two familiar French songs in this piece. The performer needs to play them in a singing fashion. The first song is a children's song which the performer should play with a charming innocence. Compared with the first song, the second one is more peaceful. The performer must shape the phrase and project the graceful melody in order to project its peaceful character to the audience.

CHAPTER II

FRANZ LISZT: *VARIATIONEN UBER DAS MOTIV VON BACH, S. 180*

Biography

Franz Liszt (October 22, 1811—July 31, 1886) was born in Raiding, Hungary.¹⁹ He was not only an outstanding composer of his generation, but also a virtuoso pianist. As a composer, Liszt composed more than seven hundred compositions. As a pianist, he toured throughout Europe to present recitals and concerts. In his life, Liszt also was known as a conductor, arranger, music teacher, philanthropist and Franciscan tertiary.

Liszt's father was not a musician, but he could play the piano, violin, cello and guitar. Therefore, Liszt was influenced by his father and showed great interest in music when he was a child. Liszt was taught to play the piano by his father when he was 7 years old. At the age of 9, in 1820, Liszt gave concerts in Hungary. At this time, his talent was discovered by a group of wealthy sponsors. They supported him in his studies abroad. To encourage Liszt to make a career in music, Liszt's father quit his secretary job and devoted his time to find his son a teacher to teach him and introduce him to performing. In 1821, Liszt studied the piano with Carl Czerny²⁰ and

¹⁹ Now Raiding, Austria.

composition with Antonio Salieri in Vienna. Later, he moved to Paris, however, he was not admitted to the Paris Conservatory because he was a foreigner. Therefore, Liszt learned composition with Ferdinando Paer and composed *Don Sanche*, which was his first and only opera.²¹

Liszt's father died in 1827. Following, Liszt lost his interest in a musical career, stopped touring and focused on reading. In this period, Liszt read large amounts of art and religious books which influenced him greatly. He received the opportunities to talk with famous authors and artists like Victor Hugo, Alphonse de Lamartine and Heinrich Heine. In 1830, Hector Berlioz appeared in Liszt's life and made a great impression on him. Simultaneously, Liszt was inspired by the July Revolution (French Revolution) of 1830 and he reconsidered his musical career. As a result of these two events, Liszt transcribed some of Berlioz's compositions, such as *Symphonie Fantastique*, and performed them in his concerts.²²

In April, 1832, Liszt participated in a charity concert for the victims of a Parisian cholera epidemic which was held by Niccolò Paganini. He was struck by Paganini's virtuosity and was greatly influenced by him. Aside from Paganini, Frédéric Chopin also became friends with Liszt and influenced him in his romantic style.²³

²⁰ Carl Czerny, 1791 –1857, Austrian composer, teacher, and pianist. His books of studies for piano are still widely used in piano teaching.

²¹ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1970), 36-41.

²² Ibid, 36-41.

²³ Franz Liszt, modified on 19 March 2016, accessed March 15, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Liszt#Early_life

In 1835, the countess Marie d'Agoult left her husband and began to live with Liszt. She bore him three children. In this period, Liszt taught at the Geneva Conservatory and wrote some articles which were published in the *Paris Revue et Gazette Musicale*. For the next couple of years, Liszt kept performing and touring in Europe, including in Switzerland, Italy, Turkey, Russia, the Balkans, Vienna and Hungary. Audiences back then spoke highly of his performance and his music. Thus, he was achieving great accolades as a pianist.²⁴

In 1847, Liszt ended his relationship with the Countess Marie d'Agoult, and another woman appeared in Liszt's life—Princess Carolyne zu Sayn-Wittgenstein. She advised him to stop touring Europe and spend more time on composing and teaching at home. In September 1847, Liszt gave his last concert at Yelisavetgrad.²⁵ Following, Liszt moved to Weimar, a city belonging to Germany, to focus on his new compositional form and one of his greatest achievements, the symphonic poem.

In 1861, during Liszt's later years, he failed to get married to Carolyne because of Carolyne's incomplete divorce paper and the death of two of his children. As a result, he decided to live alone due to his sadness. Liszt thought deeply about his life and the meaning of life for him. Consequently, in 1865, Liszt became a monk and served in a Catholic church in Rome. He continued composing and produced a lot of sacred music. Liszt's later works contain a high degree of chromaticism, Gregorian elements and some impressionistic elements.²⁶

²⁴ Alan Walker, 36-41.

²⁵ Kirovohrad, formerly Yelisavetgrad, is a city in central Ukraine located on the Inhul river.

Liszt's Piano Works

Liszt admired Chopin and Chopin's romantic style made a great impression on him. He loved the lyrical sound of Chopin, the rich and beautiful harmonies and Chopin's expansion and development of the piano's sonority. As a virtuoso pianist, Liszt mastered supreme piano techniques and infused these difficult techniques into his piano pieces to show his virtuosity. He loved to use four-octave arpeggios, trills, chromatic scales, open octaves and big leaps.²⁷

There are two categories of Liszt's piano works: one is his own compositions; another is transcriptions he made of works by other composers. With regard to his own compositions, Liszt completed various pieces during 1835-1847, such as, *Vingt-quatre grandes études*, *Années de pèlerinage* and the *Piano Sonata in b minor*. Most of his compositions among his piano works are programmatic.²⁸ As a Hungarian, Liszt composed the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, which contain twelve pieces. He used Hungarian folk themes in these rhapsodies. Liszt's other feat in his piano compositions are transcriptional works. He transcribed one hundred and ninety-three compositions which were originally composed by other composers. Liszt used various sources from composers such as Paganini, Bach, Beethoven, Berlioz and Wagner. Paganini is the person who especially inspired and was associated with Liszt. Liszt based his *Grandes études de Paganini* upon Paganini's violin version and made the

²⁶ Ben Arnold, *The Liszt Companion* (London: Greenwood Press, 2002), 20-21.

²⁷ Ibid, 20-23.

²⁸ Ibid, 73-74.

piano version just as difficult.²⁹

Liszt's experiments in harmony, rhythm and form influenced later composers greatly. The sometimes extreme use of chromaticism, modulation and ambiguous tonal centers also influenced later composers. In his works, Liszt did not only use the traditional binary and ternary forms, but also unusual forms which were created through thematic transformation.³⁰

The Influence of Religion

In 1861, Liszt settled in Rome where he began to compose more religious works. As a monk in this period, Liszt composed choral music for the church. In these compositions as well as his other sacred compositions, Liszt experimented with thin textures and dissonances. Some of his works expressed his faith and religious beliefs and conveyed his religious side to the audiences. Other works are full of depression, longing and confusion which reflect his thoughts. In his religious pieces, Liszt often used clearer tonalities instead of chromaticism. Aside from choral music, Liszt wrote piano works based on religious thoughts. There are chant-like passages and spiritual ideas in this category of his music.³¹

²⁹ Ibid, 139-141.

³⁰ Ibid, 140.

³¹ Ibid, 142.

Analysis of *Variationen über das Motiv von Bach, S. 180*

Liszt's son, Daniel, and daughter, Blandine, died respectively in 1859 and 1862. Consequently, Liszt conveyed his distressful mood by turning his musical form to lament. A large number of his compositions from his last twenty-five years are laments and dirges. *Variationen über das Motiv von Bach, S.180* is a good illustration of this type of lament. It was composed in 1862 when his daughter Blandine died. Liszt dedicated this piece to Anton Rubinstein who was a virtuoso pianist of that generation.³²

This piece is based on a theme from *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, BWV 12*, a church cantata which was composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach also used this theme in his *Mass in B Minor*. The key of this piece is the same as the original cantata. The meaning of *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* is weeping, lamenting, worrying and fearing.

Liszt makes use of the original theme, which is in f minor (Example 6), and remains in that key until the ending chorale.



Example 6

Liszt presents the theme in a lower register, using fuller chords in *fortissimo*. This first presentation is written in double duration of the original theme (Example 7). The mood is majestic and grave whereas the right hand is descending and the left

³² Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1970), 144-145.

hand is made up of ascending octave line fragments. In m. 8, the theme is presented again in octaves and the texture is thinner. The octaves in the right hand transfer to the left hand in m. 11. The opening concludes with a long trill and an ominous chromatic-like passage.



Example 7

Following are thirty variations. The theme alters between the two hands. The various rhythmic patterns reveal sadness and tears appropriately. Variations are based on the regular recurrence of the tonic every four bars.³³

Variation 1 begins on the second beat of m. 18 (Example 8), and the material is placed in the middle register. The left hand uses the theme's original duration. Liszt wrote the word "dolente" which means sadly, in the score. Compared with the *ff* theme, the first variation starts quietly and sadly.



Example 8

In variation 2 (m. 26), Liszt develops the theme by use of repeated-notes in the left hand. New material is added in the right hand (Example 9). It is important to note that in the first three variations, Liszt makes exquisite use of counterpoint.

³³ Alan Walker, 145.



Example 9

In variation 4, the texture turns thicker. The dynamic changes to *f* as the variation of the theme changes to syncopated octaves in the left hand (Example 10). The repeated-note pattern (from m. 27), appears again in m. 55, however, this time, in octaves. In variation 5 (m. 59), there is further elaboration of the theme.



Example 10

In variation 6 (m. 67), Liszt wrote “piangendo” in the score which means plaintively. The descending eighth note chromatic line in the right hand is pleading.

In variation 7 (m. 75), both hands play the same material in parallel motion. That is the first time the original theme appears in the right hand. With variation 8, Liszt is preparing for the rhapsodic section to come. In variation 9, Liszt uses dotted-note patterns in the right hand and writes triplet patterns for the left hand (Example 11). In m. 94, Liszt marks “*poco a poco acceler*” for the music to accelerate.



Example 11

In variation 10 (m. 103), the music is pushed to the climax and Liszt changes the tempo marking to Quasi Allegro. The triplet pattern, which contains chromatic octaves, is moved to the right hand (See musical score). The left hand plays the thematic motive in first inversion triads. The second *ff* appears in variation 11 (m. 111). The theme is first played in the bass line, then the same motive is heard in the soprano at m. 113. This variation displays imitative counterpoint (Example 12).



Example 12

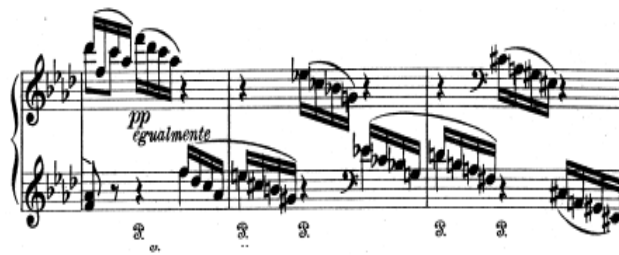
In variation 12 (m. 117), the right hand changes to a different pattern. Liszt hides elements of the theme in the musical material and he requires the pianist to utilize the soft pedal in order to create a new sound. The right hand's lines mostly imitate tears streaming gently down one's face (Example 13).



Example 13

In variation 13, variations based on sixteenth-note patterns start (m. 125). The

half notes in the left hand highlight the theme. At first the theme is presented in the lower register and then it moves up to the middle register. In variation 14 (m. 133), the running sixteenth-note and various alternating hand positions project the theme in the thinnest texture among this whole variation set. The notes stream across the treble and bass clefs. (Example 14).



Example 14

In variation 15 (m. 149), Liszt has the thumb of the left hand play the theme. In variation 17 (m. 158), the tempo is changed to *Animato*, in addition, the dynamic is *ff* again. The accent on the thematic notes bring this variation to a climax. Following, in m. 167, a solemn and rhapsodic variation appears. The fast chromatic quintuplets, sextuplets and chromatic octaves delineating the theme are representative of Liszt's main musical style (Example 15). This is one way that Liszt shows his passion within his piano works, by using these thick, loud dynamics expanding over several ranges of the keyboard.



Example 15

Another feature in Liszt's piano music is the use of rapid arpeggios. In variation 19 (m. 175), two hands play fast arpeggios whereas the half notes in the bass line show the theme. A high degree of passion is again transmitted through the music (Example 16).



Example 16

At m. 179, the theme is developed by way of broken seventh chords. In variation 20 (m. 183), the character is tempestuous and the rhythmic pattern is changed. In variation 21, a thirty-second running note pattern is used in m. 191. The chords and large arpeggios produce a rich sound. The theme's notes in the bass are generally placed on the last beat with an accent mark.

In variation 22 (m. 202), Liszt writes a chromatic descending line to imitate weeping. He marks "molto espress." in the score. The music gets quiet with a long rest at the end of this variation. The slow recitative starts after the rest. The right hand and the left hand move in parallel motion in the beginning. At m. 223, the hands reverse roles.

The "Lento Recitative," is a special section in this piece. The function of this recitative is contrast. Liszt uses this style of delivery to express the pain from deep in his heart. Liszt composed this recitative with an irregular meter and he uses many

fermatas over the rests in the left hand to support the right's hand melodic and rhythmic freedom (Example 17).



Example 17

The recitativo leads the music to variation 24 (m. 229) which is the section marked Quasi Andante, un poco mosso. The texture remains thin.³⁴ The mood of this variation is pensive. The weeping-like pattern is alternated between the two hands. In variation 25 (m. 250), the bass line is a string of repeated notes with the theme in the right hand. The left hand sounds like timpani (Example 18).



Example 18

Following, are five more variations which brings the piece to the first and only *fff* which is on the e diminished chord in m. 311. The dissonant chord is played three times in different registers and leads the music to the climax. Subsequently, the recitative-like cadenza, a single line in the right hand, gets softer. Liszt then uses chromatic notes to link the variation and chorale.

The name of the chorale is *Was Gott tut, das ist wohl getan* ("Everything that

³⁴ Ben Arnold, 150.

God has done is well done”). Bach used the same chorale to end his cantata.³⁵ After this tragic and solemn variation set, Liszt places the chorale as a finale to give the music a bright and uplifting conclusion. Liszt finishes the variations in f minor and starts the chorale in F major (Example 19). The color of major provides a sense of hope after the gloomy minor. Alfred Brendel wrote: “The entry of the chorale is a miracle of tenderness.”³⁶



Example 19

In addition, Liszt wrote the words of the chorale above the musical notes. He utilizes the last verse of the chorale, however, he does not employ its last sentence (Example 20).

Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan!
Dabei will ich verbleiben;
Es mag mich auf die rauhe Bahn
Not, Tod und Elend treiben,
So wird Gott mich ganz väterlich
In seinen Armen halten,

What God does that is done well.
I shall keep to this thought;
It may be that on the rough road
I shall be driven by distress, death and
misery,
yet God will just like a father!
hold me in his arms

Example 20

The music of the chorale fits well with the lyrics. When the words say: “It may be that on the rough road, I shall be driven by distress, death and misery,” Liszt

³⁵ Alan Walker, 146.

³⁶ Alfred Brendel, *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 83.

changes the pattern of the music by placing accent marks in the left hand and a *ff* dynamic to emphasize the meaning of the words. The music returns to *p* with “dolce” for the last sentence.

After the chorale, Liszt uses octaves, fuller chords and tremolos to the end as he conveys the sense of great joy. The music sounds like a cantata which is sung by the masses in heaven.

Performance Suggestions

This piece starts with a pickup measure, and the performer must set up this forceful introduction by counting effectively. In m. 12, the octaves change to the left hand; the performer needs to create a new color of sound to show the change.

Throughout the piece, the performer needs to bring out the particular character of each variation and project the thematic motive simultaneously. There are 30 variations and the basic mood is sad. The performer needs to express the various shades of sadness and the expressive words on the score as well, such as *dolente*, *espressivo*, *piangendo* and *plintivo*.

The performer needs to analyze all the variations and find the variations that express each mood based on the *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen*. Performers can design their own classification to help themselves understand this piece and transmit this understanding to their audiences. Some variations may have more than one mood. Here are some examples for each category:

(See Appendix A for corresponding measure numbers.)

Mood	Variations
Weinen (weeping)	2, 5, 11, 12, 15, 21, 24, 25
Klagen (lamenting)	3, 6, 10, 17, 18, 26, 29, 30
Sorgen (worrying)	1, 7, 9, 13, 22, 28
Zagen (fearing)	4, 8, 14, 16, 19, 23, 27

On the physical side of challenges in this piece, the performer must master technical feats of playing fast running notes, wide leaps, arpeggios, octaves, chords, tremolos, and repeated notes, all with the proper shape. The recitative sections also need to be shaped and paced carefully and imitate a vocalist. Pedaling is of utmost importance and Liszt wrote pedal marks in the score which the performer should observe.

The tempo changes frequently throughout the piece. The performer should set up the tempo and keep it clearly in mind when playing this piece. The pianist must memorize those moments where there is accelerando and ritardando and execute them effectively.

CHAPTER III

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: *PIANO SONATA NO. 21 IN C MAJOR, OP. 53*

Biography

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was born in Bonn. He lived there during his first twenty-two years and then moved to Vienna. Beethoven was a crucial composer in the transition between the classical and romantic eras in western art music; he also was regarded as one of the most famous and influential composers around the world. Beethoven was taught by his father, Johann van Beethoven, and Christian Gottlob Neefe, when he was young. He showed his musical talent at an early age. In 1792, he began studying with Haydn in Vienna and soon became a virtuoso pianist. He lived in Vienna until his death. Around the year 1800, Beethoven's hearing began to deteriorate and by the last decade of his life, he was almost totally deaf. He continued to compose, but did not perform in public after that. His best-known works include 9 symphonies, 5 concertos for piano, 32 piano sonatas, and 16 string quartets. Beethoven also composed other chamber music, choral works, and songs.

Beethoven's musical life can be divided into three stylistic periods: up to 1802, 1803 to 1816, and 1816 to 1827. In the first period, Beethoven focused on the piano

and eventually produced his first symphony and string quartet. In the second period, Beethoven expanded the resources and dimensions of the classical-heroic style. In the last period, Beethoven wrote in new forms. In addition, he was interested in variation techniques, counterpoint, new sonorities and new textures.³⁷

Beethoven's Piano Sonatas

Beethoven started to compose piano sonatas in 1795. The number of his famous piano sonatas is thirty-two, as well, there are some others which are labelled as WoO.³⁸ All these works are suitable for private and public performance and can be divided into three sections: early sonatas, middle sonatas and late sonatas.

The early sonatas are mainly influenced by Haydn and Mozart. The sonatas in this category are WoO 47, Op. 2, Op. 7, Op. 10, Op. 13, Op. 14, Op. 22, Op. 26, Op. 27 and Op. 28. The first four sonatas have four movements.

The sonatas of his middle period are Op. 31, Op. 49, Op. 53, Op. 54, Op. 57, Op. 78, Op. 79, Op. 81a, and Op. 90. In the letter to Wenzel Krumpholz, Beethoven said: "From now on, I'm going to take a new path." In this period, the majority of the sonatas are in three movements, while Op. 49, Op. 54, Op. 78 and Op. 81 are in two movements. Beethoven composed *Piano Sonata No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3* in a four-movement scheme, however, there is no traditional slow movement.

Beethoven's later sonatas are more elusive than the sonatas he composed

³⁷ Eric Blom, *Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas Discussed* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), 100-102.

³⁸ Werke ohne Opuszahl: "Works without opus number"

previously. He replaced his classical style with the origins of the romantic style. The sonatas that belong to this category are Op. 101, Op. 106, Op. 109, Op. 110 and Op. 111.

Analysis of *Piano Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53*

Beethoven wrote this sonata in 1804 and the Bureau des Arts et d'Industrie of Vienna published this sonata in May 1805. Beethoven dedicated this sonata to Count Waldstein who was his faithful patron.³⁹ Thus, the nickname of this sonata is "*Waldstein*". Another name for this sonata is '*L'Aurora*' ("The Dawn"), because the opening of the third movement conveys a picture of daybreak.

This sonata belongs to Beethoven's middle period sonatas, and it is one of the most famous sonatas of his middle period. This sonata contains three movements: Allegro con brio, Introduzione: Adagio molto and Rondo. Allegretto moderato – Prestissimo. This piece presents many technical challenges.

First Movement: Allegro con brio

The first movement is in sonata form. The exposition of this piece has two subjects. The first subject starts with the repeated quavers and this initial presentation ends on a c minor chord in m. 13. In m. 14, Beethoven uses the tremolo pattern on the same theme (Example 21).

³⁹ Eric Blom, 147.



Example 21

Following, the transition leads the music to the second subject in E major (Example 22).



Example 22

In the traditional sonata form, the second theme usually will be in the dominant key, however, Beethoven modulates to E major instead of G major. The second subject has a contrasting lyrical character. In m. 50, Beethoven emphasizes this subject by using the triplet rhythm (See musical score). The exposition is ended with an extended cadential section (Example 23).



Example 23

The development is based on two subjects which are in the exposition,

Beethoven makes various changes to the subjects.

In m. 156, the recapitulation starts, the strange and interesting ending of the first subject reveals Beethoven's new musical idea. In m. 168, Beethoven ends the subject in Ab instead of G. In the second subject, Beethoven starts with A major, then in m. 200, he changes to the parallel minor to modulate to C major.⁴⁰

The dynamics change frequently in this piece and the dynamic often changes when the rhythm changes. Beethoven conveys the different characters by using contrasting dynamics.

Performance Suggestions

Beethoven uses several *sf* markings within a phrase, (for example in m. 154). The performer should realize that generally this implies a crescendo within the music (with each *sf*). The *Waldstein Sonata* contains much dynamic and dramatic contrast. The performer needs to project these elements. Beethoven places some *fp* markings in the score under specific notes asking the performer to highlight those particular notes in a different character. The performer needs to change the articulation and therefore the mood to show these differences.

In m. 196, there are fuller chords in both hands which the performer must keep legato. Legato pedaling is needed here and producing the sense of a long line is required. In addition, the performer needs to project the soprano notes and create a beautiful shape.

⁴⁰Drake Kenneth, *The Sonatas of Beethoven* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 148

Second Movement: Introduzione: Adagio molto

Beethoven calls this movement “Introduction,” as it is the introduction to the third movement. Beethoven composes a lyrical melody in F major. The dynamics in this movement are *pp* and *p*, so it is quite a soft and gentle movement.

Even though the movement is labelled “Adagio,” the piece contains some agitated thirty-second notes, especially, in m. 21, as the music crescendos to the high F. After reaching this highest note the music calms down and ends on the dominant chord of C major.

The last note is interesting: This movement ends with a *sf* G, which sounds like the first flash of dawn. With a fermata sign, it produces a sense of daybreak. The G is the connection of the second movement to the third movement, and leads the music’s return to C major.

Performance Suggestions

The performer should plan the pedaling very carefully and voice the melodic lines clearly. Beethoven composed several dialogues between the music’s voices, and the performer needs to project them.

Beethoven wrote many dynamic marks in the score; for example, *rinforzando*, *crescendo*, and *decrescendo*. The performer needs to follow these marks to show the different volumes and various sounds required. Planning the dynamics and making for contrast is very important in this movement.

Third movement: Rondo. Allegretto moderato – Prestissimo

This movement is in A-B-A-C-A-B'-A rondo form. The crossed left hand plays the melody while the right hand plays a murmuring accompaniment in a lower register. Theme A (Example 24) depicts a peaceful and silent picture of the beginning of the morning twilight. The music turns to *ff* in m. 55 when the right hand plays the trill.



Example 24

Theme B (Example 25) starts in m. 62. There are triplets in the right hand and octaves placed on the off-beats in the left hand. In m. 71, the music modulates to a minor. Following is the repeat of theme A.



Example 25

Theme C appears in m. 175 (Example 26). It is in c minor. The staccato octaves are the main characteristic of this theme. From m. 221-313, Beethoven inserts a large transition section to modulate the piece's return to C major.



Example 26

Finally, in m. 313, theme A reappears (See musical score). This time, Beethoven writes *ff* in the score. After theme A, in m. 344, theme B reappears. However, Beethoven makes a change in m. 352, as both hands play arpeggiated chords in sixteenth-note triplets. In m. 400, the *ppp* and fermata make the music come to a supposed close, however, Beethoven bursts into a Prestissimo coda at m. 403. He places an *f* on the first note to create a big surprise. This coda contains various themes from before. The final blocked chords make for a strong ending.⁴¹

Performance Suggestions

The challenge for the performer is to keep the sixteenth-note broken chord accompaniment soft as the melodic line in the soprano sings forth (m. 1-13). The register of the accompaniment is very low, so it makes it more challenging to play it softly. The soft pedal can help one control the volume.

Another difficult part to perform is in m. 465-474 (Example 27).



Example 27

⁴¹ Eric Blom, 152

Beethoven wrote octave scales in dialogue between the two hands, and the tempo is very fast. Some performers use glissando to play it, while other performers play the simplification (Example 28).⁴²



Example 28

I prefer to respect the composer's composition by using a glissando to play the octave scales. This is a technically unique situation, perhaps one of the first times in any piano literature that the glissando octave technique is employed.

⁴² Donald Francis Tovey, *A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas* (London: The Associated Board, 1931), 160

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APPENDIX

FRANZ LISZT: *VARIATIONEN UBER DAS MOTIV VON BACH*, S. 180

Variation Number	Measure Number
1	18 (beat 2)—26 (beat 1)
2	26 (beat 2)—37
3	38—51 (beat 1)
4	51 (beat 2)—59 (beat 1)
5	59 (beat 2)—67 (beat 1)
6	67 (beat 2)—75 (beat 1)
7	75 (beat 2)—83 (beat 1)
8	83 (beat 2)—95 (beat 1)
9	95 (beat 2)—103 (beat 1)
10	103 (beat 2)—111 (beat 1)
11	111 (beat 2)—116
12	117—125 (beat 1)
13	125 (beat 2)—133 (beat 1)
14	133 (beat 2)—140 (beat 1)
15	140 (beat 2)—149 (beat 1)
16	149 (beat 2)—158 (beat 1)
17	158 (beat 2)—166
18	167—175 (beat 2)
19	175 (beat 3)—183 (beat 2)
20	183 (beat 3)—191 (beat 3)
21	191 (beat 4)—202 (beat 3)
22	202 (beat 4)—216 (beat 2)
23	216 (beat 3)—228
24	229—246
25	250 (beat 2)—264 (beat 1)
26	264 (beat 2)—271
27	272—280 (beat 1)
28	280 (beat 2)—287 (beat 1)
29	287 (beat 2)—299 (beat 1)
30	299 (beat 2)—322