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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 Music

Seth Ernst

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

May, 2017

GRADUATE PIANO RECITAL

Seth Ernst

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GRADUATE PIANO RECITAL

An Abstract of the Thesis by
Seth Ernst

This thesis will include program notes for advanced piano repertoire representative of the Baroque, Classical, Romantic and 20th Century music style periods. For each work, there will be biographical information about the composer, a thorough analysis and a presentation of performance suggestions. The works to be discussed include the Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 861, from Book 1 of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* by Johann Sebastian Bach; the Sonata in B-flat Major, Op. 22, by Ludwig Van Beethoven; the Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 22, by Robert Schumann; and the Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5, by Serge Rachmaninoff.

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Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Graduate Recital

Seth Ernst, Piano

Monday, May 1, 2017

Sharon K. Dean Recital Hall, McCray Hall

7:30 p.m.

Program

Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 861.....Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Sonata in B-flat Major, Op. 22.....Ludwig van Beethoven
I. Allegro con brio (1770-1827)
II. Adagio con molta espressione
III. Minuetto
IV. Rondo

Intermission

Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22.....Robert Schumann
I. So rasch wie möglich (1810-1856)
II. Andantino
III. Scherzo
IV. Rondo

Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5.....Serge Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

This recital is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree for Mr. Ernst.

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

CHAPTER I

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Biography

Johann Sebastian Bach was born on March 21, 1685, in Eisenach, Germany. He was part of a long family line of gifted musicians who were imperative to the development of Germany's musical culture. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, approximately 70 Bach family members collectively exhibited the most consistent and continuous array of musical success among any family ever recorded in history.¹ Many served as town musicians, cantors, court musicians and even kapellmeisters.² Amidst this line of influential generations, Johann Sebastian was born to Johann Ambrosius Bach as the youngest of his eight children.³ Tragically, at only nine years of age, J.S. Bach was orphaned after losing both his parents to illnesses within the year 1694.

1. Basil Smallman, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *The Oxford Companion to Music, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e522>.

2. Denis Arnold and Basil Smallman, "Bach," *The Oxford Companion to Music, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e521>.

3. Michael Kennedy, ed., "Bach, Johann Sebastian." *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed., rev, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e715>.

After the passing of his parents, Bach moved in with his eldest brother, Johann Christoph, who held the position of organist at Ohrdruf, near Arnstadt.⁴ Here he received solid musical training in the fundamentals of music and learned basic compositional principles by thoroughly studying the works of several composers.⁴ By 1700, Bach received a scholarship to the Michaelisschule in Lüneberg where he sang as a choirboy and received more training on the organ throughout the next three years. In 1703, he received the position of organist and choirmaster at the church of St. Boniface in Arnstadt, and, after four difficult years in which he endured much conflict with his superiors, transferred to Mülhausen to serve as organist at the Blasiuskirche in June, 1707. Here Bach found a comfortable setting in which to compose some of his important early church music. In October of the same year, Bach married his wife Maria Barbara, who eventually bore him seven children, including his two memorable sons Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp.⁴

Throughout the years 1708-1717, Bach took progressively more prestigious posts including such positions as court musician and Kapellmeister in various courts of the nobility. In August of 1717, he received the position of Kapellmeister to the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. While working in Cöthen, Bach composed many instrumental works, including several keyboard compositions such as the early keyboard suites, the Inventions, and the first book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*.⁴ Sadly, this time of perpetually accumulating success was interrupted by the untimely death of his wife,

4. Basil Smallman, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e522>.

Maria, in July of 1720. The following year, in December of 1721, Bach married his second wife, Anna Magdalena, who eventually bore him an additional thirteen children, among whom only three survived to adulthood.⁵

In 1722, Bach turned his ambitions toward a greater calling for the Thomaskantor position in Leipzig. He tested for the position and, after the declinations of both Telemann and Graupner for the position, was appointed in April, 1723. This post required him to oversee and provide the entirety of the yearly music for the cities' four main churches. In only his first five years in Leipzig, Bach composed approximately 150 cantatas per year. These were aside from his *St. John's* and *St. Matthew's* passions, his *Magnificat*, and numerous other motets and sacred works.⁵

The year 1729 held even more responsibility for Bach, as he began to direct the *Collegium Musicum*, a music society started by Telemann in 1702 that advocated for and produced vocal and instrumental music for church, state, and court clients. While holding this post, Bach focused on many more important keyboard works including the *Clavier-Übung*, the *Goldberg Variations* and the second book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*.⁵

During his final years of life, Bach committed himself to revising many of his earlier works and to creating an abundance of new works in a decisively more abstract and technical style. A prime example of this later style was his *B Minor Mass*, which was completed in 1748.⁵ Within the same year, he completed a majority of *The Art of Fugue*, an exhaustive review of contrapuntal techniques that he was not able to finish before his

5. Basil Smallman, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e522>.

death. During the last two years of his life, Bach suffered from total blindness and had developed severe diabetes. On July 28, 1750, Johann Sebastian Bach passed and was buried with honor three days thereafter.⁶

Music for the Keyboard

Bach left behind a wealth of keyboard music that has remained a crucial part the piano repertory throughout the past two centuries. However, none of his keyboard compositions were originally intended for the piano itself. The earliest form of the piano had come well into fruition within his life (c.1700) but was not an instrument in which Bach took much interest, having been known only to have played the instrument once in his lifetime. Instead, he wrote primarily for the organ, for which he composed mostly sacred works; and harpsichord and clavichord, for which he wrote mostly secular works.⁷ Despite their popularity and widespread use today, a majority of Bach's keyboard works were not published until well after his death. A prime example of this was found in the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, which was not published until fifty years after Bach's death in 1800.⁷

Bach maintained a high level of quality and consistency in all of his keyboard music, such that has scarcely been paralleled by any other composer since. His music presented a profound expression of the diverse emotions of the human soul and often contemporaneously uttered religious fervor and praise of God. However, he was by no

6. Basil Smallman, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e522>.

7. F.E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1995) 35.

means an innovator who diverted the course of musical evolution into a new direction. Rather, he acted as a synergist who brought two centuries of continuously evolving polyphony to its peak by combining all of the progress that had come before him into a new level of beautiful complexity and genius.⁸

The Well-Tempered Clavier

The *Well-Tempered Clavier* is undoubtedly Bach's most famous collection of keyboard works. Today, the "*Well-Tempered Clavier*" is the title collectively given to both of Bach's two complete volumes of preludes and fugues, however he originally only assigned this title to the first volume. Nevertheless, each set contains preludes and fugues in all twenty-four major and minor keys that are arranged in ascending chromatic order according to their key signatures.⁹

The title, bearing the words "well-tempered" (*i.e.* well-tuned), indicates Bach's interest in the equal temperament tuning system. This new (in Bach's time) system for keyboard tuning, in which the keys between the span of an octave were tuned into twelve equal divisions, allowed composers to write in any key signature, whereas they were previously limited to only a few tonalities with the former "mean-tone" tuning system.⁹ Bach's purpose for the *Well-Tempered Clavier* was twofold. First, he intended both volumes to be used as a method with which young keyboard players could

8. Ernest Hutcheson, *The Literature of the Piano*, 2nd ed (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1952) 20.

9. F.E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1995) 38.

systematically learn music in all major and minor tonalities. Secondly, he wished the music to be utilized as a repertoire supplement for those who were already accomplished in the art of keyboard performance.¹⁰

Prelude and Fugue in G Minor, BWV 861

The Prelude and Fugue in G minor, BWV 861, was the fifteenth insertion within the first volume of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*. Bach completed the work on this first volume in the year 1722, during which time he was serving as Kapellmeister to the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. Two years before completing this work, in 1720, Bach had lost his wife Maria, and had married his second wife, Anna Magdalena, the next year, in 1721. The year directly after the completion of this first volume, Bach was appointed Thomaskantor in Leipzig and began his famously hectic career of producing an inconceivable amount of sacred music for use in the four local churches.

Analysis

The Prelude and Fugue together impose a somber and mournful mood. The Prelude presents a beautiful and introspective melody that is thoughtfully dispersed among its three voices and, within this melody, utilizes a unique rhythmic structure that gives the music an off-balance feeling. The Fugue is in four voices and possesses an even more mournful character. It utilizes a dramatic, initially disjunct, subject with two motives. The second motive is used as the primary material for the countersubject.

10. F.E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1995) 38.

Prelude

The Prelude begins with a trilling tonic in the right hand and a slowly progressing chordal figure in the two bottom voices of the left hand (a figure that plays a vital role thrice more in this prelude as interlude material). The melodic material then commences in m. 2 with an overall descending pattern. The melody is interrupted by the first trilling interlude in m. 3, which begins to modulate the tonality toward its next tonal center. Melodic material resumes in m. 4 and gradually and chromatically brings the music to the parallel key of B-flat major.

Upon the arrival of B-flat major, the second trilling interlude commences in m. 7. Beyond this interlude, the tonality begins to descend with a two-measure sequence that utilizes a thirty-second note rhythm passing between the soprano and alto voices. After this descending sequence, the third and final trilling interlude is reached in m. 11, at which time the music has reached the key of C minor and its half-way point.

Beyond this final interlude, the music begins an uninterrupted progression throughout several tonalities that extensively utilizes the previously heard thirty-second note rhythmic motive, passing it among all three voices. Amidst this final material, the music reaches its most climactic point in m. 16 with the widest range of register yet heard. After this climax, the music gradually descends toward its end, upon which it subtly concludes in the key of G major.

Fugue

The Fugue is voiced with four parts (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) and follows the common three-part fugal form with Enunciation, Modulatory and Recapitulatory sections. The fugue analysis is presented in chart format for greater clarity.

Enunciation Section (Ms. 1-12)
Modulatory Section (Ms. 12-27)

Ms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Soprano	–	TA	TA	B	CS	CS	FC	FC	E (D-)	E >>>	E (Bb)	–	–	–	ME (F)	B	CS
Alto	S	S	CS	CS	FC	FC	–	–	FC	FC	FC	ME (Bb)	FC	CS	FC	FC	ME (Eb)
Tenor	–	–	–	–	–	TA	TA	E	–	–	–	CS	CS	–	–	FC	FC
Bass	–	–	–	–	S	S	CS	CS	E (D-)	E >>>	E (Bb)	–	ME (F)	ME	CS	CS	ME (Bb)

[Stretto]
Recapitulatory Section (Ms. 28-34)

Ms.	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
Soprano	CS (Cont'd)	B	FC	ME (C-)	ME	CS	CS	E	E	E	S	S	FC	FC	FC	FC	FC
Alto	ME (Cont'd)	B	CS	CS	FC	S	E	E	E	E	CS	CS	FC	S	S	FC	FC
Tenor	FC	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	S	S	FC	–	–	S	S
Bass	FC	B	ME (C-)	ME	CS	FC	E	E	E	E	–	S	S	FC	CS	FC	FC

<Stretto
[Stretto>>>>]
[Codetta]

Chart Legend: S=Subject, RA=Real Answer, TA=Tonal Answer, CS=Counter Subject, ME=Middle Entry, FC=Free Counterpoint, B=Bridge, E=Episode

Performance Suggestions

The performer of the Prelude should be aware of melodic position and clarity as well as a rhythmic continuity propelled by the bass voice. In the first half of the Prelude, the melody appears primarily in the soprano voice, however as the prelude progresses, the melodic line begins to move about from voice to voice. The performer must logically support the position of the melodic figures wherever they may appear and must be careful not to superimpose any other voices above them. Additionally, the melody of the Prelude possesses many highly disjunct intervals, therefore the performer should take care to incorporate those large leaps into the continuous and lyrical stream of the melody by attaching them with careful legato. Finally, the performer should utilize the bass voice as a motor rhythm in order to establish the pace of the Prelude. With the off-balance feeling of the rhythmic figurations in the melody, the stability of the steady eighth note bass rhythm is imperative.

The performer of the Fugue should consider how each appearance of the subject material will be approached and how they will preserve the exclusivity of each of its four voices. As with any fugue, the subjects, answers and middle entries should take priority in voicing considerations; however further detail must be considered in how each manifestation of said material should be approached. With the initial recitation of the subject, the performer establishes a particular mood based upon the dynamic level, articulations, and color with which it is played. However, with each repetition of this subject material, the performer must decide how to transform it based upon its context. Whether it appears in a minor key or a major key or whether it appears in a higher register or a lower register are just some examples of how the mood of the subject

material may be interpreted, and thus adjusted, based upon its contextual position. Once the performer establishes the details of each subject material appearance, the other supporting fugal elements, such as counter subjects, bridges, and free counterpoint, will naturally fall into place.

Another important detail to be considered in the Fugue is that of preserving the integrity of each of the four voices. Amidst the thick textures of the Fugue, the independence of each voice can be easily lost. Thus the performer should take great care to observe and clearly produce particular details within each line that will aid in maintaining their independence. The most crucial way to preserve voice independence in the Fugue is to understand the exact location of each fugal element (*i.e.* subject, answer, middle entry, countersubject, etc.) within each of the four voices. If the performer knows the position of each of these elements throughout the entirety of the Fugue, then they will be able to effectively pronounce them and thus support the independence of the voices in which they appear. Another effective way to accomplish voice independence is by matching the decay of held notes. When a note is held, whether by a tie or a long note value, the proceeding note in that particular voice should be carefully played so that it matches the decay of the previous held note's volume.

CHAPTER II

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Biography

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in December of 1770 with a recorded date of baptism on December 17. His father and grandfather both served in the electoral court at Bonn—his grandfather as Kapellmeister and his father as a tenor. Beethoven forthrightly received musical training from his father, who was decently versed in violin and piano and kept a modest income from teaching private lessons.¹¹ At a very young age, Ludwig received instruction from his father on both piano and violin, though it is not recorded at which age he specifically began.¹¹ One thing is readily apparent about Beethoven's early tutelage, and that is the strictness with which his father taught. Beethoven is said to have been made to stand while playing—an indication of his very young age for his lack of stature—and to have been in tears frequently.¹¹ He did not enjoy good relations with his father, but is said to have had great admiration for his grandfather, whose position of such importance as Kapellmeister undoubtedly served as an inspiration for Beethoven's ultimate musical aspirations.¹¹

11. Joseph Kerman, et al, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed September 9, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026pg1>.

At the age of seven, Beethoven gave his first public performance on March 26, 1778. According to the advertisement for the concert, he performed some “clavier concertos and trios.”¹² At the age of eight, Beethoven began studying piano and theory with Christian Neefe in 1779.¹³ Beethoven had great success under the instruction of Neefe who stated that Beethoven “would surely become a second Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart were he to continue as he has begun.”¹² Neefe became court organist in Bonn in 1782 and therefore required a deputy, a role for which he chose Beethoven. In this role as deputy organist, Beethoven showed exceptional originality and, between the years of 1783 and 1784, displayed marked progress in his compositional quality and quantity.¹² In this short span of five years, Beethoven had not only learned all that he could from Neefe, but had also surpassed him in capability. Beethoven even held, for a short stead, a partnership in the court organist position alongside Neefe.¹²

In 1787, Beethoven went to Vienna to seek out composition lessons from Mozart; however, not two weeks after his departure, he was compelled to return home after receiving news of his mother’s ailing health.¹³ Despite this setback in obtaining lessons from a comparable genius such as Mozart, Beethoven had the opportunity to meet Joseph Haydn in 1790 as he was passing through Bonn on his way back to Vienna from his first London trip.¹³ After Haydn met Beethoven and reviewed some of his work, he

12. Dennis Arnold and Barry Cooper, “Beethoven, Ludwig van,” *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e698>.

13. Joseph Kerman, et al, “Beethoven, Ludwig van,” *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 9, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026pg1>.

recognized his potential in composition. Shortly thereafter, arrangements were made to have Beethoven move to Vienna and begin studying composition with Haydn.¹⁴

Beethoven left Bonn in November of 1792 and settled in Vienna where he was to spend the rest of his life.¹⁵ Merely three weeks after his arrival, he began to study composition with Haydn and additionally began to seek out employment opportunities to supplement the cost of Haydn's tuition.¹⁵ Some of the opportunities that he found included performing piano in the private houses of the nobility and composing for several patrons who formerly employed Mozart, deceased in 1791.¹⁴ In 1794, Haydn left Vienna for a year to embark on his second London trip. Despite Haydn's absence, Beethoven continued to progress in his compositional endeavors and in March of 1796 completed his sonatas Op. 2, which he dedicated to Haydn.¹⁵ Beethoven continued to add to his portfolio of compositions and proceeded to tour throughout Europe in 1796. During this tour he garnered much valuable recognition and gained several patrons whose financial support proved to be more than sufficient for his financial stability.¹⁴

By the time he was nearly thirty years of age, Beethoven was approaching the height of his career and enjoying much fame and financial gain. However, in 1797, he contracted an infection that progressively impeded his sense of hearing.¹⁵ He desperately sought out a cure for this ailment, but found no aid in medical treatments. He did,

14. Dennis Arnold and Barry Cooper, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e698>.

15. Joseph Kerman, et al, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 9, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026pg1>.

however, gain some motivation after a six-month time of solitude in the tiny village of *Heiligenstadt* in 1802. Beethoven returned to Vienna in late 1802 and, with renewed morale, began to compose some works of great renown including the oratorio *Christus am Olberge* in 1803, the '*Eroica*' *Symphony* in 1803-1804, the famed 'Waldstein' and 'Appassionata' sonatas in 1804-1805, and his only opera, *Fidelio*.¹⁶ All of these phenomenal works were immensely popular with the Viennese public and greatly increased Beethoven's acclaim.¹⁷ Beethoven was now being called upon by such prominent names as Muzio Clementi, who secured the English rights to his latest compositions, and the estate of Prince Nicolaus Esterházy II, Haydn's last patron, who commissioned a mass.¹⁷

Beethoven's time at the pinnacle of the musical hierarchy would not last. Merely a decade after the height of his career, Beethoven's friends and patrons had either died or left Vienna, and his fame began to dwindle. Consequently, the music of Rossini began to take preeminence over Beethoven's.¹⁶ Amidst this declining popularity, Beethoven also had to endure the struggle of taking the custody of his nephew after the death of his brother Carl in 1815.¹⁶ These inhibiting factors, including the care of his nephew, his ailing ability to hear, and the lessening of his stature in the Viennese musical scene, did not completely deter his compositional motivation. Throughout the years 1818-1824,

16. Dennis Arnold and Barry Cooper, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e698>.

17. Joseph Kerman, et al, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 9, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026pg1>.

Beethoven still composed some of his most historically significant works including the *Diabelli Variations*, the *Missa Solemnis* and perhaps most importantly, his Symphony No. 9, completed in 1824.¹⁸ However, much of his work during this time was regarded by the public as crazy or, at the least, eccentric, which did not help him gain much popularity from these great works despite their importance today.¹⁸

The years 1824-1827 were the final three years of Beethoven's life, and during this time he wrote only string quartets.¹⁸ By December of 1826, he was bedridden and was somewhat helpless with his rapidly declining health.¹⁹ Before his death, he received many generous donations from various musical societies and patrons from around Europe.¹⁹ On March 26, Beethoven passed, bequeathing his estate to his nephew Karl. On March 29, a grand funeral was held in Vienna with an estimated crowd of 10,000 mourners.¹⁹

The Three Periods

Beethoven's musically active life being divided into three periods was established as early as the mid-19th century. These periods focus most specifically on the way in which his compositional style evolved.¹⁹ The early period ended in 1802, the middle period encompassed the years 1803-1812, and the late period covered the years 1813-1827.¹⁹ During the first period, Beethoven was establishing

18. Dennis Arnold and Barry Cooper, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e698>.

19. Joseph Kerman, et al, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 9, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026pg1>.

himself as a capable composer within the demanding musical scene of Vienna.²⁰ The last couple of years within this period were a time wherein he was beginning to start his experimental approach to composition and transition to the middle period.²⁰ The middle period, sometimes known as the heroic period, was a time in which Beethoven wrote music on a grand scale with a sense of heroism and triumph. A noticeable majority of his orchestral works are from this period.²⁰ The late period was when he began to compose music that took on an other-worldly sound.²¹ Herein, the mood of his music shifted from the extroverted heroism and triumph of the middle period to a more introverted somberness and depth that only increased in uniqueness and complexity.

The Early Period

The early period of Beethoven's career was a time when he was trying to impress the demanding public of Vienna and establish a name for himself most notably as a pianist and a composer of piano music. There was no other place on earth wherein existed such well-versed audience in the latest and greatest music of the age. Because of this, much of Beethoven's music from this early period was written boldly and innovatively in order to gain the admiration of the Viennese. Much of his work from this time was focused on the piano, and he consequently focused his inventive agenda on music for the piano—namely his piano sonatas. Many of his early piano sonatas contained four

20. Joseph Kerman, et al, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed September 9, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026pg1>.

21. Dennis Arnold and Barry Cooper, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e698>.

movements instead of the traditional three movements heard in those of Mozart and Haydn.²² Additionally, he introduced the *scherzo* as a movement form in his piano sonatas, a convention which had not yet been explored by his contemporaries.²³ Beethoven's approach to the piano sonata was aggressive during this time, and many consider the sonatas of this first period to be his most technically demanding piano works. The sonatas written in this period range from the Op. 2 sonatas to the op. 28 "Pastoral" and include such famed works as the "Pathetique" and the "Moonlight."²⁴

Sonata in B-flat Major, Op. 22

The final five sonatas of Beethoven's early period (Op. 22, 26, 27 i-ii, and 28) were all published in 1802.²⁴ The first among this group was his Sonata in B-flat major, Op. 22. Beethoven did the compositional work on this sonata throughout the years 1799-1800. It was during this time that he was beginning to fervently seek out a cure for his failing ability to hear.²³ Only two years before he began work on this sonata, he contracted the illness and developed the ensuing infection that would eventually cause his loss of hearing. Two years after he completed this work, he decided to attempt the reclusive self-remedy in which he sought solitude in the tiny village of Heiligenstadt.²³

22. Dennis Arnold and Barry Cooper, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 5, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e698>.

23. Joseph Kerman, et al, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 9, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026pg1>.

24. F.E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1995) 116.

Analysis

This sonata is in four movements with the first movement in *sonata* form, the second movement in *sonata* form, the third movement in *minuet* and *trio* form, and the fourth movement in *rondo* form. Throughout this sonata, there repeatedly appears a rhythmic motive wherein four sixteenth notes are played on the upbeat and lead to a quarter note (or a note of similar value) on a down beat. This rhythmic motive is used almost verbatim in many settings throughout the first three movements of the sonata.[†]

First Movement: Allegro con brio

The first movement of this sonata is in the typical sonata form. The primary characteristic is that of the sharply contrasting angular, rhythmic materials and smooth, gently flowing melodic materials. The exposition starts with a first theme that instantly utilizes the aforementioned rhythmic motive in an angular and disjunct way and relentlessly expands and rises upon it until giving way into a beautiful gently flowing melody in m. 4. As this melody comes to close, the first theme ends on an elision that leads into the transitional material at m. 8. This transitional material bears the same angular qualities that were seen in the first half of the first theme. Upon the completion of the transitional material, the second theme commences in the dominant key of F major in m. 22. The melody of this theme bears similar gentle qualities to the melody of the first theme, however it is accompanied by left hand figures that hearken back the angular, rhythmic material found in the transition and first half of the first theme. The exposition

[†] e.g. right hand figures in ms. 1-2 of mvt. 1, ms. 1-2 of mvt. 2, ms. 2-3 of mvt. 3

comes to a close with material that gradually grows in excitement and energy from unison thirds in both hands, to arpeggiated lines, to highly energetic broken octaves. The last phrase of the closing utilizes very pronounced double octaves played at a *fortissimo* dynamic level that bring the exposition to a strong close.

The development then ensues at m. 69 with the rhythmic motive being utilized in its disjunct character amongst various contexts. The previously heard octave material from the closing of the exposition is then used in combination with the rhythmic motive, and together they move through a sequence of ascending figures that give way to a long passage of descending sixteenth note arpeggios in the right hand and slow quarter note arpeggios in the left hand in ms. 92-123. This passage moves the music through several different keys until it finally comes to a rest on the dominant V7 (F7) chord in m. 126.

Upon the resolution of the F7, the recapitulation begins at m. 128 with the same material seen in the beginning of the exposition. The recapitulation continues along the same track as the exposition. However once the second theme is reached in m. 153, it remains in B-flat major instead of modulating to the dominant key as in the exposition. Closing material that is nearly identical to that of the exposition then brings the first movement to an exciting finish.

Second Movement: Adagio con molta espressione

The second movement is in sonata form. It possesses a unique aria character in which both the soaring florid melody of a vocal soloist and the orchestral accompaniment are reflected. It also imitates the typical structure of arias found in the operas of Beethoven's time with moments of vocal lines accompanied by the orchestra and

moments of orchestral ritornellos in between. The first theme of this movement is in E-flat major and is preceded by a pulsing *pianissimo* chordal accompaniment in the left hand that sets the calm ambiance of the forthcoming melody. The melody commences in the right hand with a lyrical single-note line that possesses a singing quality and uses a variation of the rhythmic motive heard in the first movement. The transition (ms. 13-18), during which the music modulates into the dominant key of B-flat major, serves as a sort of ritornello between the first and second themes. After the transition, the second theme begins in m. 18, bringing back the singing melody of the right hand and leading up to a closing in which there is a voice-like cadenza in ms. 25-26. After the florid cadenza, the exposition closes with another ritornello section throughout ms. 27-30.

The development begins in m. 31 and has a more ensemble-like character in which the lower voices of the hands are sharing and developing the melody in concert with the top voice-like line. This alternating development ends with a short single-line cadenza in ms. 45-46, after which the music returns to E-flat major and begins the recapitulation in m. 47.

The first and second themes heard in the exposition are restated in the recapitulation, though with a much more embellished character. The transition between the two themes (ms. 58-65) as well as the closing (ms. 74-77) serve once again as types of orchestral ritornellos that bridge the gaps between the moments of the voice-like solos heard in the themes.

Third Movement: Minuetto

The third movement is in the typical minuet and trio form, however the trio is replaced by an unexpected “minore” that darkens the mood of this typically light-hearted form. The A section of minuet begins with a cheerful and optimistic sounding melody that slowly ascends the span of an octave across its length and again reveals the rhythmic motive uniformly seen throughout the sonata. The B section of the minuet has startling contrasts in both dynamics and range that eventually give way to the melody heard at the beginning.

The minore has a two part structure in which the running melody is heard from the left hand during the A section and transfers primarily to the right hand in the first half of the B section. The contrasts between the minore and minuet are exhibited primarily in fluidity of motion and most obviously in tonality. Thus a possibly inferred mood of the minuet is that of a calm optimism while a possibly inferred mood of the minore is that of an anxious insecurity.

Fourth Movement: Rondo

The fourth movement is in rondo form with a seven part ABACABA structure with a coda. The first A section presents a linear melody in B-flat major, which is utilized as theme for variation throughout its various repetitions. The following B section is in F major and begins in m. 18. It possesses much less melodic material and serves as more of a developmental passage leading to the next A section. A large portion of the B section hearkens back to the arpeggios in the development of the first movement. After the recitation of the B material, the A section returns in m. 50 and possesses the same melody

heard in its first appearance, however this time it has a thicker and more varied texture. The C section then ensues in m. 67 in the key of F minor and possesses a quicker rhythmic writing that intensifies the mood of the movement. It then develops into the key of B-flat minor, at m. 95, before coming to a sudden close. The A section then returns in m. 103 with very distant sounding transitional material that utilizes small portions of the A section melody and calms the mood of the music in contrast with its previously intensified mood. Once this transitional material subsides, the full original melody of the A section is recited at m. 112 with even more variation than was heard before. The B section then returns in m. 131 with the same material as heard before; however this time it is recited in B-flat major. The final A section then returns in m. 165 with a further increased amount of variation possessing a triplet pattern in the melodic line. Upon the completion of this final A section, the coda commences with a left hand line that is reminiscent of the flowing melody of the minore in the third movement. The sonata then comes to a close with an overlapping figuration of the A section melody in a fugue-like texture and ends with a similar cadential pattern to that of the final cadence in the first movement.

Performance Suggestions

As with any Beethoven sonata, the performer of the Opus 22 should commit special attention to the presence of the previously discussed rhythmic motive throughout the sonata. Additionally, in the first movement, there should be a great contrast in timbre between the angular rhythmic moments (*e.g.* ms. 1-3) and the flowing melodic moments (*e.g.* ms. 4-7). This can be accomplished by careful usage of the damper pedal to create a less vibrant timbre during the angular material and a more reverberating timbre during

the flowing melodic material. In the development of the first movement, the continuously flowing sixteenth note passage found in ms. 92-123 should be played with the utmost of clarity while preserving a background presence behind the developing chords in the left hand. Additionally, the melodic shape of the top notes in the right hand should be preserved so as to create a sense of direction throughout this prolonged section.

The second movement can be approached as if it were an aria with a solo vocalist and orchestral accompaniment. The performer should do their best to imitate the sound qualities of such a composition by allowing the right hand melody to ring well above the dynamic level of the left hand accompaniment during the moments of the solo line (*e.g.* ms. 1-12). Conversely, the texture should be brought to a more balanced dynamic level during the moments of ritornello in between (*e.g.* ms. 12-18). More specifically, great care should be taken in the balance of voices within the development especially throughout ms. 39-45. Here there are constantly flowing lines in the lower voices that should possess a feeling of ebb and flow underneath the subtle manifestations of the vocal line interspersed above them. Finally, during the cadenza-like passages at the end of each recitation of the second theme, in both the exposition and recapitulation (*e.g.* ms. 25-26 and ms. 72-73), the performer should make an effort to preserve the sense of a vocal-sounding line. This can be achieved by maintaining a sense of vocal shape with a smooth, graduated rise and fall in dynamics in correspondence with the ascending and descending lines of the passage respectively. Also, there should be a sense of vocal rubato during the disjunct moments in the line to emulate the time taken by a singer to navigate a leap.

One of the most important aspects in performing the third movement is that of the contrasts in rhythm, tonality and direction between the minuet and minore. The bright moods expressed by the dotted rhythms and the ascending lines in the minuet should be brought out exceptionally clear, perhaps by a light approach upon the keys. In contrast, the relentlessly flowing and descending left hand melodic line in the minore should be exaggerated, perhaps with a more heavy approach upon the keys.

An important detail of the fourth movement is the repetition of the primary melodic material in the A sections in contrast with the less melodic and more transitional material of the B and C sections. The performer should seek to unify the A sections by keeping consistent phrasing of the melodic line throughout each repetition in spite of the variation of the material in the final two A sections. The performer should also observe a careful sense of the melodic line during the thirty-second note passages within the C section (*e.g.* ms. 72-77 and ms. 95-100). During these passages, the melody is placed on the offbeats of the thirty-second note rhythms, therefore the performer should focus the energy of their physical gesture on the offbeats and allow the downbeats to take a secondary role so as to preserve the integrity of the line throughout these passages. This should all be done within the context of preserving the clarity of the thirty-second note rhythm.

CHAPTER III

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Biography

The quintessential Romantic composer Robert Schumann was born on June 8, 1810, into a literature-dominated household in the city of Zwickau, Germany. His father was an author, lexicographer and bookseller with whom Schumann, as the favorite child, spent much time. Growing up in such a deeply literary environment, Schumann spent much time reading the classics of literature and developing a great literary passion, which would eventually infiltrate almost every aspect of his future career as a composer. In addition to his proclivity in literature, Schumann showed great potential in music. He was first recognized for his noteworthy ability in singing and, at age seven, and was subsequently enrolled in piano lessons with J.G. Kuntsch, organist at St. Marien in Zwickau.²⁵ Within a year, Schumann showed exceptional ability in improvisation and even composed several dances for keyboard.²⁶ Concurrently, he showed creative potential

25. John Daverio and Eric Sams, "Schumann, Robert," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed November 21, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40704pg1>.

26. George Hall, "Schumann, Robert," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed November 22, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6003>.

in literature, writing many small poems and dramatic works.

A decisive event occurred in the year 1819 when Schumann attended a concert of the famed pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles in Karlsbad, German. This was a highly influential experience upon the young Schumann that inspired him to more seriously pursue his musical aspirations. By 1820, Schumann was becoming well accustomed to the music of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Weber. Schumann's father had even tried to arrange lessons with Weber for him before Weber's death in 1826.²⁷

In 1826, Schumann's father died leaving his son in the care of his mother and his guardian, J.G. Rudel. While his father's passing was to Schumann a great emotional trial, it also presented him with a life-altering stipulation. Stated in his father's will was the requirement that Schumann attend three years at a university for study in an unspecified field in order for him to obtain his inheritance.²⁷ Deferring to the desire of his mother, Schumann attended law school at the University of Leipzig, beginning in the spring of 1828. Schumann possessed a lethargic attitude toward the cut and dry studies of law and spent more of his time studying literature and music than he did in the lecture halls of the university. His literary obsession during this time was focused primarily on the author Jean Paul. Schumann stated in his diary, "Jean Paul seems to be interwoven with my inner being; it is as if I had a premonition of him."²⁷ Concurrently, Schumann's musical aspirations continued to abound. Within this first year of his studies in Leipzig, he began studying piano with Friedrich Wieck—an eminently important figure throughout his

27. George Hall, "Schumann, Robert," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed November 22, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6003>.

life—who's nine-year-old daughter, Clara, would eventually become the composer's wife.²⁸ During this time, Schumann also became enthralled with the music of Schubert. He found Schubert's music to be artistically comparable to the writings of his literary hero, Jean Paul, and stated that Schubert's music was similar to the prose of Jean Paul in its "psychologically unusual connection of ideas."²⁹

Schumann attempted to continue his law studies for two years, spending one year at the University of Leipzig (1828-1829) and the other at the University of Heidelberg (1829-1830). However after this span of time, Schumann refused to continue his law studies and pleaded with his mother to allow him to pursue more serious studies in music. With much doubt and frustration, his mother, Johanna, arranged more intensive training with Friedrich Wieck who guaranteed that he would make Schumann a preeminent pianist within three years.²⁹

Shortly after beginning his intensified studies with Wieck, Schumann released his first published work, *Variations on the Name 'ABEGG'*.²⁹ Unfortunately, his pianistic endeavors were cut short when he began to develop a debilitating numbness in the middle and index fingers of his right hand.³⁰ The most likely cause of this handicap was his experimentation with a finger-strengthening device called a chiroplast, a device meant to

29. George Hall, "Schumann, Robert," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed November 22, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6003>.

30. John Daverio and Eric Sams, "Schumann, Robert," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed November 21, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40704pg1>.

develop finger independence that suspended certain fingers in the air while others were allowed to remain mobile upon the keys of the piano.³¹ Despite this deviation from his plans of becoming a concert pianist, Schumann remained persistent about a career in music and turned primarily to composition and criticism instead.³²

In April of 1834, the first edition of the periodical *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* was released with Schumann as editor. This publication provided insightful reviews of the new music of the day and was coauthored by Schumann and many of his friends and colleagues. This group of music critics wrote under pseudonyms and formed the allegorical league of musical purists known as the *Davidsbündler*. Together they fought against the Philistines, “the empty virtuosos,” in order to preserve the purity of music and protect it from the overblown virtuosity that was rapidly growing in popularity.³²

By the year 1835, Schumann began to show interest in the Clara Wieck, the daughter of his piano instructor. However, with Schumann’s inability to gain any notable stature as a composer, Friedrich Wieck did not find him to be a suitable husband for his daughter nor a reputable son-in-law for himself. Therefore Wieck forbade the relationship and broke ties with Schumann after the couple persisted in their desire for one another.³²

During the next several years, Schumann devoted himself to producing some imaginative and highly creative piano works including *Kreisleriana* and

31. John Daverio and Eric Sams, "Schumann, Robert," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed November 21, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40704pg1>.

32. George Hall, "Schumann, Robert," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed November 22, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6003>.

Faschingsschwank aus Wien. Within these compositions, he created characters such as Florestan and Eusebius who represented two sides of his own personality. He additionally created numerous other characters who represented various friends and colleagues and whose personalities were epitomized in the music.³³ By 1840, the twenty-nine year old Schumann and the twenty year old Clara Wieck won a long-fought legal battle against Clara's father and were united in marriage on September 12.³⁴ The emotional and social stability established by this marriage proved to be a most important factor in Schumann's significant forthcoming achievements.³⁴

During the next several years after his marriage, Schumann completed many large compositional feats. In 1840, he focused heavily upon composing songs, completing the song cycles *Myrthen*, *Frauenliebe und-leben*, and *Dichterliebe*, amongst other works. In 1841 he finished work on his First Symphony and began working on material for his only piano concerto and what would eventually become his Fourth Symphony.³⁴ In 1842, after extensive study of Haydn and Mozart, he took an interest in chamber music and completed three string quartets.³⁴ However, all of this compositional progress was not without adversity when, in 1843, Schumann developed a severe mental illness that affected him for several months. Though he had experienced similar nervous attacks in the past, none were as severe or as long as this.³⁴

33. John Daverio and Eric Sams, "Schumann, Robert," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed November 21, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40704pg1>.

34. George Hall, "Schumann, Robert," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed November 22, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6003>.

His sister Emilie had taken her own life as the result of such attacks, and Schumann feared that he too would suffer the same fate. Despite this debilitating mental illness, Schumann was still able to complete work on the oratorio *Das Paradies und die Peri*, which quickly launched him into international recognition as a composer.³⁵ By 1845, Schumann completed his Piano Concerto and his Second Symphony, but nevertheless continued his mental declination.³⁵

Throughout the years 1846 to 1853, Schumann continued fervently composing and completed numerous major works including his Third Symphony, Cello Concerto and Fourth Symphony. Despite his efforts to support Clara and their seven children by means of his compositional restitution, Schumann's income still remained inadequate. In April of 1850 he obtained the position of music director in Düsseldorf, but was promptly removed in 1853 because of his social awkwardness and mental instability that caused his relationships with local musicians to greatly suffer.³⁵

Schumann's condition was rapidly deteriorating, and on February 26, 1854, he asked to be admitted to an asylum. The following day he attempted suicide by casting himself into the Rhine. On March 4 of the same year, Schuman was admitted to a mental institution near Bonn, and remained there for the final two years of his life. On July 29, 1856, he died of pneumonia at the age of forty-six.³⁵

35. George Hall, "Schumann, Robert," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed November 22, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6003>.

Music for the Piano

Schumann's compositional style was generally more complex than that of his romantic contemporaries, namely Schubert and Mendelssohn. Where his predecessors showed well-rounded clarity in nearly all musical elements, Schumann displayed ambiguity in the like. Rhythmic devices such as tied notes and syncopations skewed the location of the beat.³⁶ Abnormal harmonic rhythms typically placed the tonic in a weak position, and extensive use of chromaticism, suspensions and unresolved dissonances all combined to relentlessly invoke instability.³⁷ Such instability was often present throughout the entirety of Schumann's compositional output and was especially pronounced within his piano literature. His piano works did, nonetheless, present a novel approach to writing for the instrument, as he often avoided such commonalities as Alberti bass and extensive use of scales and arpeggios.³⁶

The most predominant part of Schumann's compositional output was his piano music. Specifically, he completed more works for piano than he did for all of his other musical genres combined. Having received the entirety of his musical training through the medium of the piano and having had the initial aim of reaching the level of a concertizing pianist, Schumann relied on the piano as his natural medium of expression.³⁶ A majority of his literature for the piano was written in the form of character pieces. These pieces were programmatic in nature and were meant to communicate or identify

36. Ernest Hutcheson, *The Literature of the Piano*, 2nd ed (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1952) 152, 156.

37. F.E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1995) 165.

with an extra-musical idea that was typically inspired by literature. Many of Schumann's character pieces were written as collections, which were composed of many brief movements meant to be performed in succession. One of the most common programmatic elements presented in the character pieces was the implementation of the fictional group of self-conceived characters dwelling within Schumann's hyperactive imagination. Through the use of these characters, he would "personify himself as Florestan, the ardent, hot-headed reformer, or Eusebius, the dreamer of dreams, or again as Raro, a sort of mediator between Florestan and Eusebius."³⁹ He additionally created characters for his wife Clara, his group of fellow musicians, the *Davidsbündler*, and other friends and rivals.³⁸

The Piano Sonatas

Though the character piece dominated Schumann's pianistic compositional portfolio, he also composed in what some might label the "old forms." Schumann created within the framework of the sonata, fantasia, toccata, and theme and variation forms.³⁹ His most significant output among these more traditional structures was in the sonata. Three sonatas were completed by Schumann between the years 1832-1838. These include the Sonata No. 1 in F-sharp minor, Op. 11; the Sonata No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22; and the Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 14, entitled the "Concerto without Orchestra". All three sonatas are large, four-movement works that line up almost verbatim with the structural

38. Ernest Hutcheson, *The Literature of the Piano*, 2nd ed (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1952) 155.

39. F.E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1995) 174.

standards set by Beethoven and Schubert. Each begins with a large first movement in sonata form, utilizes a scherzo and a slow three-part form for its two middle movements, and ends with a large finale either in rondo or sonata form.⁴⁰

Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22

The Sonata No. 2 in G Minor was the last of Schumann's piano sonatas to be completed, hence its higher opus number. However, it was officially published earlier than the F minor (Op. 14) Sonata and was consequently given its earlier, "No. 2," sequence number. Schumann completed the work for this sonata throughout the years 1833-1837 and it was subsequently published in 1838. He began work on this sonata shortly after the injury to his hand influenced him to divert his career from professional piano performance to composition and criticism. By the time he had completed its compositional work, he and Clara were in the midst of their prolonged legal battle with her father who had forbade their relationship. Two years after the sonata was published, Robert and Clara were united in marriage. Schumann dedicated this sonata to Henriette Voigt, a pianist and musical advocate in Leipzig whom Robert and Clara highly respected.⁴¹

Analysis

The Sonata in G minor, Op. 22, was the most formally stable among Schumann's

40. F.E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1995) 174-5.

41. Ernest Hutcheson, *The Literature of the Piano*, 2nd ed (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1952) 176.

three piano sonatas; however it possessed just as much impulsive spontaneity as anything Schumann ever wrote.⁴² This sonata is in four movements with the first movement in sonata form, the second movement in a ternary ABA' form, the third movement in a scherzo form, and the fourth movement in rondo form. Throughout the entirety of this sonata, the two sides of Schumann's personality—fiery personified in Florestan and contemplative personified in Eusebius—can be clearly heard vying for the attention of the listener.

First Movement: So rasch wie möglich

The first movement of this sonata is in the traditional sonata form. The expressive marking that Schumann chose to place at the beginning is the German phrase *So rasch wie möglich*, which translates “as fast as possible”. The movement begins with a brief three measure introduction headed by an attention-grabbing sforzando g minor chord prolonged with a fermata. After this chord a rolling, left hand, broken chord accompaniment begins to set the pace of the movement and initiates a long stretch of material that can be identified with Schumann's fiery Florestan sentiment. By m. 4, the first theme of the exposition commences bearing an astoundingly simple yet profound descending scalar pattern. This theme is repeated three times with an increasingly intense mood rising in both dynamics and register. It yields a half cadence at the end of both its first and second repetitions, however after its third repetition, this theme is drawn out further and brought to a close with a perfect authentic cadence on an elision with the next

42. Ernest Hutcheson, *The Literature of the Piano*, 2nd ed (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1952) 176.

material. Highly chromatic transitional material, beginning in m. 24, then gradually decreases the stability of the music by displacing the beats with repeated use of syncopation and obscuring the tonality by relentlessly avoiding a tonic through continuous chromaticism. The music finally arrives at a decisive F7 chord in ms. 57, which acts as a dominant V7 and indicates the arrival of the relative key of B-flat major. The second theme then commences in m. 59 in the key of B-flat major, once again bearing a strong displacement of the downbeats with repeated use of syncopation. This theme, however, possesses a much calmer character relative to Schumann's Eusebius side. Upon the completion of the second theme, closing material brings the music of the exposition to a close with a reminiscence of the accompaniment pattern heard in the first theme and a modulation back to the key of g minor.

The development then begins in m. 93 with an abrupt modulation to the key of c minor and embarks on a winding trek throughout numerous tonalities during which it utilizes several motives originally heard in the exposition. After a few undulations with fiery ascensions and breathtaking falls, the music of the development takes a decisive turn in the key of g minor during its last six measures and, upon the arrival of an indisputable F7 chord in m. 205, gives way to the a return of the first theme material.

Upon the arrival of this first theme material in m. 207, the recapitulation commences utilizing identical material to that of the exposition. The same first theme, transition, and second theme are recited. However with a slight adjustment amidst the transitional material, the second theme arrives in the parallel key of G major instead of the relative B-flat major heard in the exposition. This calm utterance of the Eusebius side, amongst all of the previous fiery Florestan material, lasts only briefly before the music is

launched into an ambitious coda at m. 288. At the onset of this coda, Schumann placed the tempo instruction *Schneller*, which literally translates “more quickly”. The unison broken chords of the coda rapidly ascend to a high point at which the first theme material is recalled and given the tempo instruction *Noch schneller*, indicating “even faster.” The movement then comes to a rapid and intense close with fragmented variations of the first theme material that abruptly end on three G minor chords.

Second Movement: Andantino

The second movement of this sonata is an arrangement of Schumann’s posthumously published lied “*Im Herbst*”. Though this song was not published until after the composer’s death, Schumann completed its compositional work between the years 1827-1828. Its text depicts a lover longing for his beloved who is ostensibly far removed from him. He wishes the sun to set and nightfall to ensue upon his dwelling, so that the warmth and comfort of day may reach his beloved.

Zieh’ nur, du Sonne, zieh
Eilend von hier, von hier!
Auf daß ihr Wärme komm’
Einzig von mir!

Move, sun, only move
Quickly away from here,
So that warmth may come to her
From me alone.

Wlkt nur, ihr Blumen, welkt!
Schweigt nur, ihr Vögelein!
Auf daß ihr sing’ und blüh’
Ich nur allein.

Wilt, flowers, only wilt,
Be silent, you little birds,
So that I, I alone,
May sing and blossom for her.

The original form of the song was composed of two brief stanzas bearing identical melodic structures. However, Schumann greatly lengthened the music in this arrangement utilizing the melody of the stanzas several times. He placed double bar lines between each recitation of the melodic material, giving the music a sectionalized, strophic feel. Though the key signature of this movement remains in C major throughout, it is really only discernable as a tonal center upon the arrival of the final cadences of each stanza. This is due to the incredible amount of chromaticism with which the melody and accompaniment were written.

In its first recitation, the melody is used very purely along with the chordal accompaniment heard in the original form of the song. The melody is then repeated with a heavily varied chromatic accompaniment and an intensified final cadence. The third appearance of the melody then varies yet further, intensifying both the melody and accompaniment, and brings the music to a strikingly tense climax with relentless chromaticism. After this climax, the original manifestation of the melody and accompaniment returns and leads the music to a coda, which brings the movement to a close with a drawn-out deceptive cadence giving way to a final gentle arrival upon a plagal cadence.

In retrospect this movement can be seen as a ternary ABA form with a coda. The first and fourth recitations of the song material can be recognized as the first and last A sections, respectively. The second and third recitations of the song material can be conceptualized as the B section, due to the similarities in their accompaniment patterns and the continuity of character between them.

Third Movement: Scherzo

The third movement of this sonata is a scherzo in g minor written in a rondo-like ABACA form. This movement possesses an exclusively fiery Florestan disposition in contrast with the previous movement's mellow Eusebius qualities. The first A section begins with a furiously repeated chordal sequence played in a quick dotted rhythm. This gives way to a bold descending melodic line in octaves reminiscent of the melody heard in the first theme of the first movement. This section ends with a half cadence that conveys the music into the B section.

The contrasting B section then begins in m. 13 in the relative key of B-flat major and possesses a continuously offset beat through syncopation. This section creates a moment of calm between the A sections, due to its contrasting *piano* dynamics and centralized register. The second A section then ensues in m. 21 following a nearly identical course as the first—save for a perfect authentic cadence at its conclusion.

Upon the completion of the second A, the C section commences in m. 33 bearing similar rhythmic and dynamic character to that of the B section but utilizing new melodic material that passes between the hands. The C section is repeated twice and the music then moves through progressively intensifying transitional material that gradually increases in both range and dynamics. This transitional material leads the music into the A section for its final recitation at m. 53. The final A section is nearly identical to the second but possesses some extra accents upon key points within its descending melodic line that create a more heightened intensity before this movement is brought to its abrupt and fiery ending.

Fourth Movement: Rondo

The fourth movement of this sonata is in a unique rondo form that only possesses alternating A and B sections and reveals no alternative C material in the middle of the movement. Thus, instead of utilizing the traditional ABACA five-part rondo scheme, Schumann utilized the less common ABABA five-part scheme with a coda. The three A sections of this rondo are nearly identical to one another with only minor changes in the register placement of some left hand accompaniment material and different transitional material at each of their conclusions. The two B sections are very similar in terms of structure, but possess significant differences in tonality.

The first A section begins in the key of g minor at an astounding *presto* pace and in an undoubtedly Florestan character. The most prevalent characteristic of the A sections is the perpetual tremolo octave figures that interweave an ambiguous melody between both hands throughout their interlocked textures. Throughout the A section, the highly ambiguous melody can be heard in either the top or bottom voices of either hand, depending upon where the pianist chooses to emphasize the voicing. Despite its ambiguous melodic content, this first A section has very definable phrases, which concurrently create melodic contours and slowly build upon each other toward the climax at the end of the section.

The first B section then ensues in m. 29 with an immediately contrasting Eusebius character that dramatically reduces the tempo and dynamics and shifts the tonality to a more lighthearted E-flat major. The melodic content of this initial B material hearkens back to the scalar material heard in the first theme of the first movement. This calmer material is repeated and developed throughout several tonalities before arriving at a

subtle imperfect authentic cadence in the key of F major in m. 60. Directly proceeding this cadence, the original tempo of the movement returns. However, a reserved character is preserved giving this part of the B section a combination of the Florestan and Eusebius characteristics and perhaps revealing some of Schumann's mediatory personality, Raro. The proceeding material recalls the tremolo material of the A section but utilizes smaller intervals of fifths and sixths with a more definable melodic line within the soprano voicing. This material develops through several seemingly ambiguous tonalities and eventually expands to full octave tremolos at m. 93. After the expansion of the intervals, the music quickly gains momentum and is seamlessly transitioned back into the A material at m. 133.

The second A section is nearly identical to the first, but utilizes a less outspoken point of transition to the following B section. After the material of the A section moves through its sequence of phrases, it unexpectedly sustains an E-flat major chord, which acts as a dominant to the proceeding A-flat major material in the following B section, which begins at m. 159. The B section then repeats in a very similar likeness to that of its first manifestation, however it follows a much different path of tonality than its predecessor. Where the first B section began in E-flat major and decisively landed on F major (m. 60) before transitioning back to G minor, this second B section begins in A-flat major and lands on B-flat major (m. 90) before transitioning back to G minor for the final recitation of the A section.

Upon the arrival of the final A section in m. 263, the previously heard A material is repeated. However with this recitation, the transitional material at its end grows to a climactic high and leads the music to an extraordinarily tense C7 chord at a *fortissimo*

dynamic level in m. 296. After a brief pause, a *prestissimo* coda begins with a significantly contrasting *pianissimo* dynamic level and a thinner two-voice texture. The whirling circular figures of this prolonged cadenza-like coda progressively increase in intensity through a rising dynamic level and expanding range. The movement comes to a close with a final impassioned phrase that utilizes a recitation of the tremolo octave material, extracted from the first three measures of the A sections, and is concluded with three abrupt g minor chords.

Performance Suggestions

With the tempo marking *So rasch wie möglich*, indicating as fast as possible, the performer should certainly play the first movement with as brisk a tempo as possible while preserving clarity throughout the dense textures. However, care must be taken not to take too quick a tempo so as to leave room for an increase in velocity upon arriving at the coda, indicated by *Schneller* and later *noch Schneller*. Additionally, throughout the entirety of the first movement, the performer should carefully balance the voices to prevent the often single-note melody from getting lost in the thick and active textures. With a clear implementation of the primary melodic figures, the performer should secondly prioritize the ingeniously interwoven countermelodies that pervade nearly every voice within each section of this movement. Finally, the performer should carefully approach the articulation of the first movement's coda. If played too heavily and with too much emphasis on *legato*, the sheer velocity of the sixteenth notes will invoke a sense of muddiness. Thus the performer should maintain a sense of separation and lightness of touch throughout the coda, which will allow for greater ease of velocity and a clearer presentation of the material to the listener.

The second movement is indeed an adaptation of a lied. Thus the performer should continuously prioritize a strong sense of lyricism in the melodic line by keeping each subsequent note in close dynamic proximity to its neighbor and by utilizing a robust *legato* feeling. Additionally, the performer should emphasize the strophic construction of this movement by introducing unique phrasing with each repetition of the melody and by emphasizing the harmonic and textural nuances built into the varied accompaniment patterns with which each stanza is paired.

The third movement is constructed with striking contrasts that should be capitalized upon. The repetitious A sections possess a highly frantic and dramatic character. Within each, the performer should carefully observe and implement the enriching nuances such as the sforzandos, which heighten the rhythmic instability, and the slurs, which group the notes of the descending melodic line into asymmetrical numbers. The alternative sections, including the B and C material, consistently offer a convincingly humorous relief from the drama of the A sections and embody the true character of a *scherzo*. Upon arriving at each contrasting section, the performer should capitalize on the decreased dynamic levels and the more lighthearted and humorous articulations.

The fourth movement presents a technical demand with its rapid and repetitious tremolo figures. The performer should take care to preserve a relaxed approach throughout all of the tremolo material in order to preserve their stamina. Additionally, the vivacity of the A sections should not be allowed to influence the performer's patience when approaching the calm beginnings of each B section. A simple breath can be indispensable in clearing the tension created by the A sections and can be utilized as

means of setting the new pace for the initially slower B material. The performer should approach the coda of this movement in similar fashion to that of the first movement's coda. A light and separated touch should be utilized in order to prevent an undesirable muddiness in the sound. The *legato* articulation, indicated by the overarching slurs, can be alternatively accomplished with a light and careful depression of the damper pedal.

CHAPTER IV

SERGE RACHMANINOFF (1873-1943)

Biography

Serge Rachmaninoff was a Russian composer, pianist and conductor born in Semyonovo, Russia in 1873. His family had great wealth early in his life, but his father quickly depleted that wealth with reckless spending and took his family from owning multiple estates to owning only one in Oneg. It was in Oneg that Rachmaninoff began to study piano with his mother and later with Anna Ornatskaya, who had studied at the Moscow Conservatory. Because of overwhelming debts, the Rachmaninoff family sold their estate in Oneg and moved to a flat in St. Petersburg. In 1882, the young Serge attended the St. Petersburg conservatory where he studied piano with Vladimir Demyansky and harmony with Aleksandr Rubets.⁴³ However, due to both the separation of his parents and the death of his sister, Rachmaninoff did not make great progress at the conservatory and, upon the recommendation of his brother, moved to Moscow in 1885 to study with the pedagogue Nikolay Zverev.⁴³

It was here that Rachmaninoff started a more intense and disciplined study in

43. Barrie Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (England: Scholar Press, 1990), 36.

music. Living together with two other pupils in Zverev's flat, he encountered a rigorous early morning practice schedule and a saturation of the classical repertoire. He also came into contact with some significant musicians of the day including Anton Rubinstein and Tchaikovsky, who became his biggest compositional inspiration.⁴⁴ In 1888, Rachmaninoff moved into the senior department of the Moscow Conservatory and began to study piano with Ziloti, counterpoint with Taneyev and harmony with Arensky. Due to the close quarters and lack of privacy in Zverev's flat, Rachmaninoff eventually moved into the estate of his relatives the Satins. In the summer of 1890, Rachmaninoff joined the Satin's at their summer retreat in Ivanovka where he found the peace and quiet that would give him the focus and inspiration for composing. It was, in fact, at Ivanovka that Rachmaninoff would complete the majority of his compositions throughout his career.⁴⁵

Rachmaninoff graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1891 and soon thereafter composed his first piano concerto and first symphony. The first symphony harbored some very negative critiques, and afterward, Rachmaninoff did not compose much until his marriage in May, 1902. As a wedding gift, the Satin's gave him and his wife a small part of their estate in Ivanovka.⁴⁴ The moral support of his wife and the home of his own in Ivanovka gave him the motivation to resume composition and throughout the next fifteen years he produced some of his most successful music

44. Geoffrey Norris, "Rachmaninoff, Serge," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50146>.

45. Geoffrey Norris, "Rakhmaninov, Sergey (Vasil'yevich)," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e5481>.

including the second and third piano concertos, two piano sonatas, the two sets of Etudes Tableaux, and the ten opus 23 preludes to name a few.⁴⁶ During the time of these great compositional strides, Rachmaninoff contemporaneously consolidated his career as a concertizing pianist, touring throughout Russia and making his American debut in 1909.⁴⁷

In light of the enormous success of his American tours along with the advent of the 1917 Russian October Revolution, Rachmaninoff migrated his family to the United States in 1918. Here he undertook a rigorous concert schedule in order to support his growing family, which now included two daughters. For the next score, Rachmaninoff continued his burdensome tours and simultaneously continued to compose more works in order to maintain financial stability. Some of his works composed in these later US years include the fourth piano concerto, the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, the 'Corelli' *Variations* for solo piano and the *Third Symphony*. Though these works possessed a hint of Rachmaninoff's Russian nationalistic sentiment, they dramatically lacked the palatial style of his earlier masterpieces, such as the second and third piano concertos.⁴⁷

In his later years, Rachmaninoff experienced frequent illness and thus made the resolution to conclude his concertizing career after the 1942-1943 season. However by February, 1943, Rachmaninoff began experiencing chronic fatigue and, after giving a

46. Geoffrey Norris, "Rachmaninoff, Serge," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50146>.

47. Geoffrey Norris, "Rakhmaninov, Sergey (Vasil'yevich)," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e5481>.

concert in Knoxville, Tennessee, fell very ill. Only six weeks later, he died of cancer at the age of sixty-nine.⁴⁸

Music for the Piano

Rachmaninoff produced a wide variety of notable music in many different genres with his most significant output in the piano, orchestra, opera, solo voice, and chamber idioms. Despite producing a plethora of highly renowned music that defined the Russian style in many genres, his most momentous achievements were undoubtedly found in his writing for the piano. As a masterful concert pianist, Rachmaninoff applied his in-depth knowledge of the instrument to produce exceptionally idiomatically pleasing music. Avoiding empty virtuosity, he wrote to exploit the full potential of the piano's expressive capabilities.⁴⁹

As a neo-romantic composer of the early twentieth century, Rachmaninoff wrote piano music in several forms commonly associated with the Romantic Era. These included such compositions as etudes, sonatas, theme and variations, fantasies, rhapsodies, and preludes, among others.⁴⁹ One of the most important and time-tested of these pianistic genres in which he wrote were his preludes. Rachmaninoff composed a total of twenty-five preludes throughout his life. These included the first and most famous Prelude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 3; the ten Preludes, Op. 23; the thirteen Preludes, Op. 32;

48. Geoffrey Norris, "Rakhmaninov, Sergey (Vasil'yevich)," *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e5481>.

49. Geoffrey Norris, "Rachmaninoff, Serge," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50146>.

and the final Prelude in D minor. The Preludes Op. 23 and 32 together with the Op. 3 cover all twenty-four major and minor keys. Though he completed such a feat, Rachmaninoff did not seem to have originally planned to compose a full set of works in all major and minor keys. This can be deduced from the significantly fragmented manner in which the preludes were completed and published throughout his life.

The Preludes Opus 23

The Preludes, Op. 23, were composed throughout the years 1901-1903 and were dedicated to Alexander Siloti, a cousin from whom Rachmaninoff received much needed financial support. They were written as both a self-motivational tool and as a means of financial support after the unsuccessful premier of his first symphony. The Prelude No. 5 in G minor was the first among the group to be completed, coming to fruition in 1901. The remaining preludes were composed after Rachmaninoff's marriage in May, 1902. All of the Op. 23 preludes are brief works lasting only three to five minutes each, however they encompass a nearly equivalent range of expression as might be heard in a much larger work.⁵⁰

Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5

The Prelude in G Minor, Op. 23, No. 5, was not only the first among its group to be composed, but it also became the most famous and recognizable work in the set.⁵⁰ This prelude was completed amidst a time of refocusing and re-motivating in

50. Geoffrey Norris, "Rachmaninoff, Serge," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50146>.

Rachmaninoff's life. Only four years earlier, in 1897, the first symphony had undergone its disastrous premiere. However by 1901, Rachmaninoff completed the work on his second piano concerto, which he premiered with great success in October of the same year. The following year, he was married and thereafter began to produce what many would label his most quintessential works, such as the Third Piano Concerto and the Second Symphony.⁵¹

Analysis

The Prelude in G Minor is in a ternary ABA' form with quickly paced A sections and a slightly slower and contrasting B section. The prelude bears a martial character with the initial expressive marking *Alla Marcia*. This martial feeling is strongly communicated in the A sections, but the B section creates a significant contrast focusing on a more beautiful freely-flowing melodic line rather than rhythmic rigidity.

The A section begins at a low *piano* dynamic level and introduces the primary thematic material of the piece, which possesses a highly disjunct and rigidly articulated character. From this starting point forward, the music slowing begins to gain momentum not in velocity but in dynamic and textural intensity. The original theme is recited three times throughout this section with an increasingly intensified temperament within each repetition. All the while, the strict martial feeling is preserved with deliberately placed staccatos, tenuto markings, and accents. Upon the arrival of this section's climax, amidst

51. Geoffrey Norris, "Rachmaninoff, Serge," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed March 1, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50146>.

the third repetition of the main theme, the music quickly begins to lose its textural and dynamic intensity and prepares for the start of the contrasting B section. What once was a *fortissimo* dynamic level and full four-note chords in both hands, quickly diminishes to a *piano* dynamic level and a single-note texture in both hands.

The B section then seamlessly begins in m. 35 at a *pianissimo* dynamic level, subtly introducing an illustrious rolling left hand accompaniment and a highly dramatic right hand melodic line voiced in softly spoken four-voice chords. This melody and accompaniment encompass three phrases that progressively rise in intensity. These three phrases are then repeated with the addition of an intense inner voice reinforces the momentum of the B material and pushes it to a greater climax. Upon the conclusion of the B section climax, the music gradually diminishes and slows to its most subdued character yet, with a *pianississimo* dynamic level and a much slower paced tempo.

The A' material then commences in m. 50—still within the confines of the subdued character—and immediately resumes the original martial character of the prelude with its strictly placed articulations and march rhythm. As this section progresses, it slowly builds in velocity and dynamic level and, again, recites the primary melodic material thrice, though with intensifying modifications in tonality and texture. After the climax of this A section within the third repetition of the primary melodic material, the music begins a gradual descent in both register and dynamics and reaches a small coda at m. 80, which steadily brings the music to its close. The final phrase of the prelude is a *leggero* sequence that brings this predominantly dark and serious prelude to a light-hearted ending.

Performance Suggestions

One of the most important elements of this prelude are the carefully placed articulation marks especially present in the A sections. The performer should approach the subtle yet distinct differences in the changing articulations among the various repetitions of the main theme.

Within the B section, specifically, the performer should recognize the stark contrast in articulation as the music demands a complete change of character within this section. Also within the B section is the alluring middle voice, which enters upon the second recitation of the B material. The performer should strongly project this voice, perhaps even beyond the soprano voices, so as to maximize its stunning effect.

The second A section has a very subtle entrance that is minimal in both dynamic level and tempo. The performer should carefully observe the *poco a poco accelerando e crescendo al Tempo I* instruction placed in its third measure. Upon the arrival of the Tempo I, the original A tempo should be restored, however the dynamic level should still be reserved until the climax at the third repetition of the main theme. When properly carried out, this gradual two and a half page dynamic growth creates a most exhilarating effect that is only made more captivating by the intriguing *pianissimo, leggiero* phrase with which this prelude is uniquely concluded.

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