2015

Pedagogical Thoughts on Liszt's Six Concert Etudes

Zhiwei Zheng

Follow this and additional works at: <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Zheng, Zhiwei, "Pedagogical Thoughts on Liszt's Six Concert Etudes" (2015). *Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports*. 7044.
<https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/7044>

This Dissertation is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by the The Research Repository @ WVU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Dissertation in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you must obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This Dissertation has been accepted for inclusion in WVU Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports collection by an authorized administrator of The Research Repository @ WVU. For more information, please contact researchrepository@mail.wvu.edu.

Pedagogical Thoughts on Liszt's *Six Concert Etudes*

Zhiwei Zheng

**Dissertation submitted to the
College of Creative Arts
at West Virginia University**

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Musical Arts in
Piano Performance**

**Peter Amstutz, D.M.A., Chair and Research Advisor
Mitchell Arnold, D.M.A.
Dengliang Gao, Ph.D.
William Haller, D.M.A.
Lucy Mauro, D.M.A.**

School of Music

**Morgantown, West Virginia
2015**

**Keywords: Franz Liszt; Concert Etudes; *Ab irato*; *Il lamento*; *La leggerezza*;
Un sospiro; *Waldesrauschen*; *Gnomenreigen***

Copyright 2015 Zhiwei Zheng

ABSTRACT

Pedagogical Thoughts on Liszt's *Six Concert Etudes*

Zhiwei Zheng

This research project presents a pedagogical analysis of Franz Liszt's *Six Concert Etudes* for piano, which are grouped in three sets:

Ab irato, S. 143

Trois Études de concert, S. 144

Il lamento

La leggierezza

Un sospiro

Zwei Konzertetüden, S. 145

Waldesrauschen

Gnomenreigen

This paper focuses on suggestions for learning or teaching each of these concert etudes, dealing with the structure of themes, keys, dynamics, programmatic interpretation, and specific technical issues. Several performing elements are discussed in detail, including melody and bass lines, musical phrasing, rhythmic pulse, tempo rubato, layered dynamics, and pedaling.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Peter Amstutz for his assistance and insights during this learning experience. To my family go my thanks for their understanding and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
List of Musical Examples	v
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures	x
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Overview	2
Scope	8
Purpose.....	9
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	10
CHAPTER III: THE YEARS IN WEIMAR AND ROME	20
CHAPTER IV: PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SIX CONCERT ETUDES	30
Elements of Performing Liszt's Music	31
Technique.....	31
Phrasing.....	33
Tempo rubato	34
Layered Dynamics.....	35
Pedaling.....	36
Imagination	39
Characteristics of Liszt's Compositional Techniques	40
Thematic Transformation and Innovative Form	41
Chromaticism	42
Other Compositional Techniques	45
Pedagogical Analysis.....	49
<i>Ab irato</i>	50
<i>Il lamento</i>	74
<i>La leggerezza</i>	107
<i>Un sospiro</i>	143
<i>Waldesrauschen</i>	169
<i>Gnomenreigen</i>	203
CONCLUSION	232
BIBLIOGRAPHY	236

List of Musical Examples

Musical Example 4.1, “Il lamento”: Chromaticism in T ₁ (mm. 4-8)	43
Musical Example 4.2, “Ab irato”: Chromatic accompaniment (mm. 31-34)	43
Musical Example 4.3, “Un sospiro”: Cadenza (m. 37)	44
Musical Example 4.4, “La leggierezza”: Chromaticism (mm. 31-33)	44
Musical Example 4.5, “La leggierezza”: Descending-third relationship (mm. 76-78).....	46
Musical Example 4.6, “Un sospiro”: Descending-third relationship (mm. 70-71).....	46
Musical Example 4.7, “Un sospiro”: Octatonic scale and descending-minor-third relationship in bass (mm. 66-71).....	47

Ab irato

Musical Example 4.8.1, “Morceau de salon”: The ending before the lyrical section in E major (mm. 54-62).....	51
Musical Example 4.8.2, “Ab irato”: The ending before the lyrical section in E major (mm. 58-86)	52
Musical Example 4.9.1, “Morceau de salon”: Opening phrase (mm. 1-8).....	53
Musical Example 4.9.2, “Ab irato”: Opening phrase (mm. 1-9).....	53
Musical Example 4.10.1: Original motif	55
Musical Example 4.10.2: Various materials based on the motif (mm. 1-3, 12-13, 21-23, 65-66, 73-76, and 104-105)	55
Musical Example 4.10.3: Different accompaniment textures for the motif (mm. 7-9, 31-32, 39-40, 44-45, and 55-57)	55
Musical Example 4.11: Three peaks in material “a”	59
Musical Example 4.12: Damper pedals in the third phrase of material “a” (mm. 21-30).....	61
Musical Example 4.13.1: Five-note scale in material “a ¹ ” from Busoni edition (mm. 35-39)	63
Musical Example 4.13.2: Five-note scale in material “a ¹ ” with different fingering and specific method of hands alternation (mm. 35-39).....	63
Musical Example 4.14: Cross rhythm between two hands (mm. 44-50).....	64
Musical Example 4.15: Two ways of performance (mm. 51-53).....	65
Musical Example 4.16: Dynamic contrasts before the climax in material “a ¹ ” (mm. 51-62).....	66
Musical Example 4.17: Latent dynamics, breath and pulse (mm. 68-72)	67
Musical Example 4.18: <i>Decrescendo</i> for the dotted half note (m. 79).....	67
Musical Example 4.19: Damper pedals for virtuosic passage (mm. 37-38).....	68
Musical Example 4.20: Damper pedals in climax passage (mm. 67-69)	68
Musical Example 4.21: The second phrase in section B (mm. 97-104)	70
Musical Example 4.22: Last two phrases in Coda (mm. 116-125)	72
Musical Example 4.23: Dynamic plan in the third phrase in Coda (mm. 112-115).....	73

Il lamento

Musical Example 4.24.1: Sigh motif in Introduction	77
Musical Example 4.24.2: Sigh motif in T ₁ (mm. 4-5).....	77
Musical Example 4.24.3: Sigh motif in T ₂ (mm. 30-31).....	77
Musical Example 4.24.4: Sigh motif in Climax	77
Musical Example 4.25: Pedagogical analysis in Introduction (mm. 3-4).....	80
Musical Example 4.26: Dynamic and tempo design (mm. 78-81).....	82
Musical Example 4.27: Analysis of phrasing in T ₂ (mm. 30-40)	88

Musical Example 4.28: Melody and bass (mm. 41-53)	91
Musical Example 4.29: Timing and dynamics (mm. 51-52).....	92
Musical Example 4.30: The first part in the climax section (mm. 66-73).....	96
Musical Example 4.31: Two possible dynamic plans (mm. 89-91)	99
Musical Example 4.32: Damper pedals in climax (mm. 82-90)	101
Musical Example 4.33: Melody and bass notes in material a ⁴ (mm. 144-154)	105

La leggerezza

Musical Example 4.34: Basic motif (m. 1)	111
Musical Example 4.34.1 (1): The motif “B-C-D ^b -E-F-A ^b ” in Climax (mm. 68-71)	111
Musical Example 4.34.1 (2): The motif “B-C-D ^b -E-F-A ^b ” in Coda (mm. 94-98).....	111
Musical Example 4.34.2: T ₁ based on the motif “C-E-F” (mm. 11-13).....	111
Musical Example 4.34.3: T ₂ based on the motif “C-D ^b -F” (mm. 27-29)	111
Musical Example 4.34.4 (1): Modulation based on the motif “B-C-D ^b ” in Section B (mm. 31-33)	111
Musical Example 4.34.4 (2): Modulation based on the motif “B-C-D ^b ” in Section B ¹ (mm. 57-59)	111
Musical Example 4.34.4 (3): Modulation based on the motif “B-C-D ^b ” in Section B ¹ (mm. 66-67)	111
Musical Example 4.35.1: Descending chromatic scale for the bass line (mm. 11-13).....	112
Musical Example 4.35.2: Chromaticism in cadenza (m. 40)	112
Musical Example 4.35.3: Chromaticism in melody (m. 41)	112
Musical Example 4.36: Combined motives C-D ^b -F and B-C-D ^b in section B ¹ (mm. 60-62)	113
Musical Example 4.37: Fingering and dynamics (mm. 84-85)	115
Musical Example 4.38: Pulse and dynamics in Introduction (mm. 1-3)	116
Musical Example 4.39: Pedal suggestions in Introduction (mm. 8-10)	118
Musical Example 4.40: Important bass note D ^b , pulse, breath, dynamics, and pedals in section A (mm. 15-23).....	120
Musical Example 4.41: The second modulation in section B (mm. 37-41)	122
Musical Example 4.42: Quick and wavy dynamic changes in section B (mm. 28-30)	123
Musical Example 4.43: Pulse in the measures with irregular meters (m. 44 and m. 52)	126
Musical Example 4.44: Dynamic change (m. 48).....	127
Musical Example 4.45: Tonality and breath (mm. 60-62)	128
Musical Example 4.46: Melody, bass, and dynamics in the first phrase of section B ¹ (mm. 52-57)	130
Musical Example 4.47: Dynamics (mm. 63-65)	132
Musical Example 4.48: <i>Accelerando</i> and resistance (mm. 66-69)	134
Musical Example 4.49: Tempo rubato (mm. 78-80).....	137
Musical Example 4.50: Damper pedals (mm. 84-85)	138
Musical Example 4.51: Polyphonic melody and bass (mm. 92-93).....	139
Musical Example 4.52: Dynamic plan in section A ² (mm. 88-93).....	140

Un sospiro

Musical example 4.53.1: Melodic shape related to “sigh” in one phrase (mm. 3-5).....	143
Musical example 4.53.2: Melodic shape related to “sigh” in one section (mm. 22-30)	143
Musical example 4.54: Materials “a” and “b”	146
Musical example 4.55: Comparison between the third phrases in material “a” and “a ¹ ” (mm. 7-10 and 19-22)	147

Musical example 4.56: Musical plan in the first two phrases of material “a” (mm. 3-8)	151
Musical example 4.57: Tempo rubato in the consequent phrase of material “a ¹ ” (mm. 21-22) ..	153
Musical example 4.58: Tempo rubato in the third phrase of material “b” (mm. 27-30).....	155
Musical example 4.59: Dynamic and pedal changes in the first cadenza (mm. 37-38).....	157
Musical example 4.60: Pedal changes (mm. 30-31)	158
Musical example 4.61: Melody and bass in the second phrase of material “b ² ” (mm. 40-46)	160
Musical example 4.62: The second cadenza (m. 52)	162
Musical example 4.63: Dynamic changes (mm. 46-49).....	163
Musical example 4.64: Breathing and pulse (mm. 53-55)	164
Musical example 4.65: Melody, bass, and tempo rubato (mm. 60-61)	165
Musical example 4.66: Dynamic change (mm. 64-67)	167
Musical example 4.67: Pedals and dynamics (mm. 71-77).....	168

Waldesrauschen

Musical Example 4.68: Original theme in D ^b major (mm. 2-5)	174
Musical Example 4.68.1: Theme with rhythmic and registral change (mm. 15-16)	174
Musical Example 4.68.2: Shortened theme with decoration and intervallic change in F major (mm. 30-31)	174
Musical Example 4.68.3: Extended theme with polyphonic texture in F major (mm. 32-36).....	174
Musical Example 4.68.4: Shortened theme with double counterpoint and modulation (mm. 45-48)	174
Musical Example 4.69: Unexpected dynamic changes (mm. 11-16)	176
Musical Example 4.70: Practice of different rhythmic patterns	177
Musical Example 4.71: Main melody based upon diatonic scale and arpeggio (mm. 2-5)	179
Musical Example 4.72: Performance practice of simplified melody and harmony (mm. 2-4)....	179
Musical Example 4.73: Linear harmony associated with ascending chromaticism (mm. 9-14)..	180
Musical Example 4.74: Pedals suggestions in the original theme “a” (mm. 5-10).....	183
Musical Example 4.75: Unusual dynamic changes in variation “a ¹ ” (mm. 22-25)	185
Musical Example 4.76: <i>Crescendo</i> with <i>accelerando</i> (m. 26)	185
Musical Example 4.77: <i>Più rinforzando</i> with tempo rubato (mm. 28-29)	186
Musical Example 4.78.1: Dynamic nuance (mm. 19-21).....	186
Musical Example 4.78.2: Dynamic nuance (m. 27).....	187
Musical Example 4.79: “Slow motion” for the grace note (m. 30)	188
Musical Example 4.80: Fully diminished seventh chord in different inversions and directions (mm. 49-54).....	190
Musical Example 4.81: Harmony and dynamics (mm. 55-62)	191
Musical Example 4.82: Preferred louder melody in variation “a ³ ” (mm. 45-46)	192
Musical Example 4.83: Tempo rubato and pedals (mm. 58-60)	193
Musical Example 4.84.1: Sequential modulation in the second phrase of variation “a ¹ ” (mm. 22-24)	194
Musical Example 4.84.2: Sequential modulation in the second phrase of variation “a ¹ ” (mm. 68-70)	195
Musical Example 4.85: Fingering and preferred main notes (m. 84)	197
Musical Example 4.86: Breathing for two possible phrase divisions (mm. 71-83).....	199
Musical Example 4.87: Layered dynamics (mm. 71-78)	200
Musical Example 4.88: Pedals (mm. 83-86).....	202

Gnomenreigen

Musical Example 4.89.1: Combined diatonicism and chromaticism in theme A (mm. 1-4).....	204
Musical Example 4.89.2: Combined diatonicism and chromaticism in theme B (mm. 21-28)...	204
Musical Example 4.90.1: Simplified melody in section A (mm. 5-20).....	205
Musical Example 4.90.2: Simplified melody in section A ¹ (mm. 103-120).....	206
Musical Example 4.91.1: Ending of section B (mm. 33-37).....	206
Musical Example 4.91.2: Extended ending of section B ¹ (mm. 69-76)	206
Musical Example 4.92: Material derived from theme A, in section C (mm. 77-84)	207
Musical Example 4.93: Local dynamic changes within the main dynamic range piano (mm. 21-23)	209
Musical Example 4.94: Two dynamic accent signs (mm. 17-20)	210
Musical Example 4.95: Fingerings (m. 64).....	212
Musical Example 4.96: Two ways of fingering to practice the A-major scale by using thumb and index finger only	212
Musical Example 4.97.1: First choice of melody line (mm. 21-22).....	214
Musical Example 4.97.2: Second choice of melody line (mm. 21-22)	214
Musical Example 4.98: Breathing (mm. 1-8)	215
Musical Example 4.99: Layered <i>crescendo</i> in the last phrase in section A (mm. 13-20).....	216
Musical Example 4.100: Tempo rubato in the end of the opening phrase in the second section A (mm. 39-42).....	216
Musical Example 4.101: Pulse (mm. 72-76).....	218
Musical Example 4.102: Pedals (mm. 21-22).....	219
Musical Example 4.103: Different ways to pedal in the <i>velocissimo</i> passage (mm. 69-71).....	220
Musical Example 4.104: Melody and dynamics in the third phrase of section C (mm. 85-93)...	221
Musical Example 4.105: Dynamics and pedals in the fourth phrase of section C (mm. 94-102)	222
Musical Example 4.106: Fingering in the last phrase of section A ¹ (mm. 115-120).....	223
Musical Example 4.107: Local dynamic changes in the first phrase of section A ¹ (mm. 102-103)	224
Musical Example 4.108: Local dynamic changes in the third phrase of section A ¹ (mm. 110-114)	224
Musical Example 4.109: Two ways to use damper pedals in the last phrase of section A ¹ (mm. 115-120)	225
Musical Example 4.110: Waltz dance rhythm (mm. 123-127)	227
Musical Example 4.111: Dynamics in polyphony (m. 134).....	227
Musical Example 4.112: Pedal suggestions (mm. 137-144)	229
Musical Example 4.113: Pulse in the Coda (mm. 143-147).....	229
Musical Example 4.114: Dynamic changes between the hands in the first phrase of the Coda (mm. 143-156)	230
Musical Example 4.115: Final <i>crescendo</i> and <i>decrescendo</i> (mm. 163-168).....	231

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Comparison table of colors and represented performing elements	49
Table 4.2, “Ab irato”: Structure	54
Table 4.3, “Il lamento”: Structure	77
Table 4.4, “La leggerezza”: Structure	112
Table 4.5, “La leggerezza”: Contrasts of dynamics, tempo rubato, and mood (mm. 94-96)	142
Table 4.6, “Un sospiro”: Structure	144
Table 4.7, “Waldesrauschen”: Structure	175
Table 4.8, “Gnomenreigen”: Structure	209
Table 4.9, “Gnomenreigen”: Structure in Huijie Sun’s analysis	209

List of Figures

Figure 4.1, “La leggerezza”: Equal division of the triplet against the septuplet in one beat	114
Figure 4.2, “La leggerezza”: Spiraling <i>crescendo</i>	131
Figure 4.3, “La leggerezza”: The second or third phrase as the softest phrase during <i>crescendo</i>	131
Figure 4.4, “Gnomenreigen”: Arc of the right wrist (mm. 21-22).....	213

Chapter One

Introduction

Overview

Franz Liszt (1811-1866) produced 58 etudes during his compositional career, including both original and revised works. Among these, six major sets represent his final versions of the individual pieces:

Twelve Études d'exécution transcendante, S. 139¹ (1851 or 1852)

Six Grandes études de Paganini, S. 141² (1851)

Ab irato, S. 143³ (1852)

Trois Études de concert, S. 144 (1848 or 1849)

Zwei Konzertetüden, S. 145 (1862 or 1863)

Grande Fantaisie de bravoure sur La clochette de Paganini, S. 420 (1832-34)

In addition to these works, Liszt wrote 68 studies in twelve books named *Technische Studien*, S. 146 (1868-73 or 1880) in his later years. Unlike the previous studies, these were not intended for the concert stage; they are finger exercises.

While the 24 etudes (S. 139, S. 141, S. 143, S. 144, and S. 145) appeared during Liszt's Weimar period (roughly from the late 1840s to 1861) and the beginning of his Rome period (the early 1860s), there is some ambiguity about the precise time period

¹ When he was 15 years old, Liszt wrote *Étude en douze exercices*, S. 136, each of which emphasizes a single technique in a small-scale composition. The set contains 13 pieces, although the last one, in F Major, *Preludio, Allegro maestoso*, has not been published. In 1837, he revised this set as *Vingt-quatre grandes études*, S. 137 (12 pieces) with many alterations such as broader characteristics, more uniformity, and more difficult technical demands in this edition. In 1840, he reworked the fourth etude independently, with the title "Mazeppa," S. 138, containing changes compared to the previous edition. Another ten years later, the second and final edition of *Études d'exécution transcendante*, S. 139 was finished. Liszt gave ten of these etudes titles and all 12 of them became popular concert pieces.

² *Grandes études de Paganini*, S. 141 (1851) was the revision of his *Études d'exécution transcendante d'après Paganini*, S. 140 (1838-40). Both had six pieces and were dedicated to Clara Schumann. In addition, *Grande Fantaisie de bravoure sur La clochette de Paganini*, S. 420 was singly published in 1834 in Paris and the bell-like motive was incorporated into "La campanella" later.

³ In 1840, Liszt wrote a single study *Morceau de salon, Étude de Perfectionnement*, S. 142; it first appeared in a publication by Fétis and Moscheles' *Méthode des Méthodes de piano* in 1842. After one decade, he revised it as "Ab irato," S. 143.

during which they were composed, according to multiple references. Scholars agree on the exact date for only a small number of the etudes, such as the *Six Grandes études de Paganini* (1851) and “Ab irato” (1852). But for most of the other etudes, there are no dated autographs. The famous biographer and scholar of Franz Liszt, Alan Walker, notes the year 1851 for the *Transcendental Etudes*, 1845-49 for *Trois Études de concert*, and 1862 for *Zwei Konzertetüden*.⁴ In the “Forward” to his edition of *Franz Liszt: Completed Etudes for Solo Piano*, Ferruccio Busoni, an Italian musician and editor, speculates that the *Transcendental Etudes* were completed in 1852, *Trois Études de concert* in 1848, and *Zwei Konzertetüden* in 1863.⁵ Another biographer, Ben Arnold, has published extensively on the music of Franz Liszt. In the book *The Liszt Companion* (2002), he suggests the year 1851 for the last revision of *Transcendental Etudes*. He also mentions that Liszt’s *Trois Études de concert* were composed between 1845 and 1849, and *Zwei Konzertetüden* sometime between 1861 and 1863.⁶ Another book, *Liszt* (associated with the Master Musicians series), provides lists of works in appendices. The author, Derek Watson, arranges Liszt’s works chronologically. Watson agrees with Walker and Arnold about the year of *Transcendental Etudes*. However, for the *Concert Etudes*, he puts a question mark before the year 1848 for *Trois Études de concert* and gives 1862-63 for *Zwei Konzertetüden*.⁷

⁴ Alan Walker, “Liszt,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 2001), 14: 786-820.

⁵ Ferruccio Busoni, forward to *Complete Etudes for Solo Piano*, ser. I, by Franz Liszt (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910-1911), as reprinted by Dover Publications Inc. (New York, 1988), ix & xi.

⁶ Ben Arnold, ed., *The Liszt Companion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002): 97, 103, and 164.

⁷ Derek Watson, *Liszt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 357-9.

From the time he composed the *Transcendental Etudes* and the *Paganini Etudes*, to the time he wrote the *Six Concert Etudes*, Liszt himself transformed from a young man with passion and curiosity into a grandfather who had endured all the hardships of life. During his time in Weimar and his first years in Rome, he achieved success both in love (with Princess Carolyne) and in his music career; however, he gradually became unpopular with the public by the late 1850s and he lost his beloved son and a daughter in 1859 and 1862, respectively.

Some say that dramatic life creates dramatic music. As a pianist, Liszt's virtuosity and musicianship during his performances caught the attention of many people throughout Europe. Some of his compositions are flamboyant and were regarded as controversial by some of his contemporary composers. He developed the etude as a genre in its musical conception, technical innovations, individualized form, and in making programmatic references.

The Harvard Dictionary of Music presents the following definition of an etude:

A single etude usually focuses on one technical problem; etudes are usually published in groups more or less systematically covering a range of such problems in a range of keys. In present-day usage, the etude falls between the exercise, a short formula not worked out as a formal composition, and the concert etude, which can stand as a self-sufficient piece of music.⁸

At the turn of the 19th century, composers like Muzio Clementi, Johann Baptist Cramer, and Carl Czerny contributed many exercises to this genre. Chopin set the standard, while raising the quality and difficulty level; in his hands, the etude became a concert genre

⁸ Don Michael Randel, ed., "Etude," in *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003): 301.

with high artistic value. Liszt primarily developed etudes for his own concert programs, while extending their musicality and virtuosity. His etudes are more complex, symphonic, sectional, and programmatic; they often include several cadenzas and various interpretive terms. The *Transcendental Etudes* trace Chopin's sequential key scheme, which is based on alternating major and relative-minor keys within an uncompleted circle of descending fifths: C-a-F-d-B^b-g-E^b-c-A^b-f-D^b-b^b. But each etude no longer focuses on a single technique and most of them are longer than their traditional predecessors. Ten of the twelve pieces have their own titles.

Schumann composed two sets of piano etudes influenced by Paganini's *Caprices for Unaccompanied Violin*, Op. 1: the *Etudes after Paganini Caprices*, Op. 3 (1832) and the *Concert Etudes after Paganini Caprices*, Op. 10 (1833). Schumann's Paganini etudes predate those by Liszt; they also place relatively more emphasis on the poetic side of Paganini's pieces.⁹ By contrast, Liszt's set demonstrates a more virtuosic, dramatic, picturesque, and popular side of the concert repertoire. Unlike Paganini and Schumann, he also adds programmatic titles for two of the works, calling the third and fifth etudes "La campanella" and "La chasse," respectively.

The *Six Concert Etudes* reinforce the features of the *Transcendental Etudes* and the *Paganini Etudes* with more programmatic imagination and flexible forms. Stewart Gordon summarizes the characteristics of the *Transcendental Etudes* and the *Concert Etudes*:

They represent a cross-pollination between the concept of the etude and that of the tone poem. Technical difficulties abound, it is true, but the fact that they are

⁹ Stewart Gordon, *A History of Keyboard Literature: Music for the Piano and Its Forerunners* (Belmont, CA: Schirmer, Cengage Learning, 1996): 312.

interlaced with dramatic, orchestral-like gestures, and often decorate long, lyrical lines, results in music that sounds far removed from didactic goals.¹⁰

Each concert etude describes a mental state, a picture, a person, or a movement. Liszt is not the first composer to write such characteristic pieces, but his approach to a specific kind of expression or emotion is more sensitive, strong, and varied, compared with many of his contemporaries. His technical demands go far beyond mere finger exercises, providing description of the musical content. For instance, in “Gnomes” Liszt uses many *staccato* appoggiaturas to portray the small gnomes while applying wild and whirling sixteenth notes to suggest their rapid circles in the dance.

Regarding form, rather than employing a conventional structure like the typical ABA of a character piece, Liszt tends to use a sectional arrangement which often relies upon thematic transformation or metamorphosis of themes.¹¹ His declaration “New wine demands new bottles” vividly describes the complementary relationship between form and content: change in the one necessitates change in the other.¹²

The synthesis of using various pianistic techniques, programmatic titles, and thematic transformation makes each concert etude stimulate the imagination and senses of audiences. For example, the title “La leggerezza” refers to lightness and swiftness. Although the title was not originally given by Liszt, the lightly-running chromatic notes in the right hand, gliding cadenzas, dreamy key modulations, and the constant up-and-down motions clearly invite the ears and minds to fly. It might be hard to assign a typical

¹⁰ Gordon, 313.

¹¹ In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* (4th edition), “metamorphosis of theme” has the same definition as “thematic transformation.”

¹² Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt* (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1983), 2: 357.

form (like ternary, rondo, or sonata) for the piece, but the thematic transformations and double bars help in marking the specific sections.¹³

For Liszt, the metamorphosis of themes is a way of story-telling. Through the changeable techniques, keys, textures, and dynamics, the principal theme sounds as if a balloon, a kite, or a feather sometimes floats up and sometimes falls down during the day and night. In these concert works, Liszt explores the capabilities of the instrument and pushes them to their extreme limits; he concentrates on the musical content and expression rather than a traditional form or a specific technique. His creativity epitomizes 19th-century romanticism—the individual and the subjective over the universal, the emotional and spiritual over the rational.

¹³ The form of “La leggerezza” will be discussed later, in Chapter Four.

Scope

This paper focuses on two aspects of the topic:

- 1) Although the paper is limited to the consideration of only six works, through these works it examines a broad understanding of stylistic characteristics in Liszt's piano music, especially in the context of the Weimar period.
- 2) The paper provides pedagogical suggestions related to practice and performing and also regarding Liszt's compositional style. General ideas, such as Liszt's pianos, tempo fluctuation, layered dynamics, breathing, pedaling, and techniques, are presented first. Then, in the pedagogical analysis of each concert etude, it discusses the programmatic titles, structure and form, and methods of practice.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore several ways of teaching the *Six Concert Etudes* to advanced piano students. A student at this level wants both to learn how to practice a masterpiece as well as how to approach the interpretation of such a work from the viewpoints of background, structure, theme, and imagination. Moreover, it is helpful to understand a composer's stylistic characteristics and composition techniques through pedagogical consideration of his music.

Some of Liszt's *Six Concert Etudes*, such as "Il lamento" and "Ab irato," are infrequently performed. Compared to some of Liszt's other works, there are fewer publications that specifically discuss these six masterpieces. While these etudes might not be as notable as the *Sonata in B Minor*, they are well-designed and representative 19th-century romantic works with innovative forms and advanced techniques. Each of them has its own peculiarities and tells a different story. They are extremely valuable undertakings, both for performance and also for research.

Chapter Two
Review of Literature

There are innumerable published sources for Liszt's biography, his letters, and his music in general, along with a huge number of sources about genres, music scores, piano master classes, pianistic techniques, and analyses of specific pieces, especially the *Sonata in B minor*. In 1983, there were already 10,000 books counted in the Liszt bibliography.¹⁴ In addition, contributions to the journals of the *Liszt Society* have flourished across the world since the first such group was formed in Budapest in 1893.¹⁵ Furthermore, thousands of dissertations directly discuss Liszt's pianism, virtuosity, innovations, religion, and famous pieces; many others discuss nationalism or a specific genre, or even Liszt's pieces that refer to reflections in the water. Nonetheless, it is challenging to find useful information that specifically deals with his concert etudes.

With respect to Liszt's life story, Alan Walker's three-volume biography, *Franz Liszt*, is influential and monumental. The second volume, *The Weimar Years (1848-61)* divides Liszt's life and career in Weimar into four time periods: *New Beginning (1847-48)*, *Court and Kapellmeister (1848-53)*, *The Years of Maturity (1853-57)*, and *Gathering Storms (1857-61)*.¹⁶ Each section has four to seven chapters, with a number of characteristic titles under the chapter. While the first three sections focus on Liszt's struggling career with his growing achievements as composer, Kapellmeister, orchestra conductor, teacher, and author, the last section *Gathering Storms* concentrates on his life of triumph and tragedy, and his positions as a father and husband. A glimpse into Liszt's

¹⁴ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 1:27.

¹⁵ Alan Walker, "Liszt Societies," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 2001), 14: 877.

¹⁶ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: vii-xi.

compositional techniques, such as harmonic inventiveness, metamorphosis of themes, and structure and form is provided in this volume as well. This book offers detailed background of Liszt's life during the Weimar period, which is helpful to Chapter Three of the present study, "The Years in Weimar and Rome." However, it is astonishing that there is no reference to the *Six Concert Etudes* in this huge work. Walker also contributes to the "Franz Liszt" and "Liszt Societies" articles in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. In the "Franz Liszt" article, although most of the sections discuss Liszt's biography and music, one section called "Liszt and the Piano" is especially attractive. It introduces Liszt's hand and the issue of tempo rubato, which is useful information for the overview of Liszt's performance style in Chapter Four of the current study.

Two books, each entitled *Liszt*, by individual authors Sacheverell Sitwell¹⁷ and Derek Watson,¹⁸ divide Liszt's life into several periods. Both volumes offer detailed information about Liszt, his family, friends, and lovers, his musical output, the positions he took, the successes he achieved, and the pressure and tragedy he suffered. Watson also refers to Liszt's music in the areas of piano technique and teaching, and his musical language. Within the chapter "Original Piano Music," Watson divides the works chronologically. In their chapters about Weimar, the two writers do not agree about the time period. Sitwell marks 1847-1861, whereas Watson indicates 1848-1861. It is easy to understand Watson's marking because Liszt started life in Weimar in 1848 and left the city in 1861. In contrast, the year Sitwell suggests might coincide with the relationship between Liszt and Princess Carolyne—they met in 1847 and planned to get married in

¹⁷ Derek Watson, *Liszt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 79-126, 169-92, and 227-30.

¹⁸ Sacheverell Sitwell, *Liszt*, rev.ed. (London: Cassell, 1955), 139-223.

1861. In discussing Liszt's years in Rome, Watson chooses "L'Abbé Liszt" as the chapter title. As with Walker's study, these two books are primarily associated with Chapter Three of the present document. Again, there are relatively few references to the *Six Concert Etudes* and most of the discussion focuses on their publication years, programmatic meanings, and brief mention of technical issues.

In terms of criticism and interpretation, *The Liszt Companion* is mainly comprised of articles about Liszt's music by different writers. Ben Arnold, as both editor and author, writes two articles, "Piano Music: 1835-1861" and "Piano Music: 1861-1886," as part of the third chapter, "Keyboard Music."¹⁹ He classifies *Trois études de concert* and "Ab irato" under "Miscellaneous Etudes." The depiction of each concert etude is short. Some comments discuss technical issues, some relate to motif and theme, some discuss the form and structure, and others mention comparisons between different editions. Arnold also connects Liszt's "Il lamento" with Chopin's Etude, Op. 10, No. 3.

The Cambridge Companion to Liszt, edited by Kenneth Hamilton, presents another compilation of essays by various scholars regarding Liszt's music and his influence. Half of the essays concern Liszt's piano music. The one entitled "Liszt's Early and Weimar Piano Works,"²⁰ written by Hamilton himself, contains a brief overview of all the concert etudes in only one short paragraph. Similar to Arnold, Hamilton discusses the relationship between Liszt's "La leggerezza" and Chopin's Etude, Op. 25, No. 2. Another essay by Hamilton, "Performing Liszt's Piano Music,"²¹ is beneficial for the

¹⁹ Ben Arnold, ed., *The Liszt Companion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 73-5, 96-104, and 164-5.

²⁰ Kenneth Hamilton, "Liszt's Early and Weimar Piano Works," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, ed. Kenneth Hamilton (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 57-85.

²¹ Kenneth Hamilton, "Performing Liszt's Piano Music," in Hamilton, 171-191.

overview of Liszt's performance style in Chapter Four of the present study. It addresses Liszt's pianos and their characteristics during his Weimar years. It presents the surprising assertion that Liszt tended to choose relatively soft volume levels when performing his piano pieces.²² In addition, Hamilton explores Liszt's teaching, performance aesthetics, pedaling, tempi, and other technical aspects in this essay.

Steward Gordon's *A History of Keyboard Literature* is viewed as a textbook for piano students. The chapter "Franz Liszt"²³ offers his biography as well as his piano works. Gordon points out that "Liszt seemed increasingly directed toward musical, expressive values and concepts with lofty philosophical or literary connections" during the Weimar period.²⁴ Under the subtitle "Etudes," for each concert etude Gordon only gives published years and English translations of the titles, but his conclusions about Liszt's etudes are accurate and comprehensive.

Regarding piano instruction and study, a book called *Lisztian Keyboard Energy* by Bertrand Ott discusses the theory (e.g., muscles, touch, dynamism, and emotional attitude), elements (e.g., shoulders, wrist, hand, elasticity, and loudness in playing), and practical applications (e.g., useful remarks on polyphony, pedaling, phrasing and rubato) of Lisztian technique.²⁵ Although the writer refers to many examples of piano works by Liszt and by other composers, there are no score illustrations in the book. In the introduction, "Why Franz Liszt?", Ott suggests criteria for a Lisztian piano technique, including ease, beauty of tone, a taste for orchestral sound, the molding of phrases, and

²² Kenneth Hamilton, "Performing Liszt's Piano Music," in Hamilton, 185.

²³ Steward Gordon, 305-28.

²⁴ Steward Gordon, 306.

²⁵ Bertrand Ott, *Lisztian Keyboard Energy: An Essay on the Pianism of Franz Liszt*, trans. Donald H. Windham (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen, 1992), ix-xxiii, 105-51, 155-98, and 207-50.

the ability to listen to oneself. In the present study, the pedagogical-analysis section regarding the *Six Concert Etudes* draws to some extent on Ott's suggestions for dealing with specific technical problems.

Ferruccio Busoni was an Italian composer and virtuoso pianist, and is regarded as a spiritual father of music aesthetics; he was also a well-known transcriber and editor, especially of works by J. S. Bach, Mozart, and Liszt. In the "Forward" to *Franz Liszt: Complete Etudes for Solo Piano, Ser. I & II*, he introduces the 58 etudes of Liszt in detail and asserts that Liszt's aim with these pieces is to awaken feelings and to stimulate audiences' imaginations.²⁶ He carefully compares and contrasts the old and new editions for *Transcendental Etudes* and *Paganini Etudes*; however, for the *Six Concert Etudes*, he only offers the publication years, the publishing companies, to whom the works are dedicated, and the sources of the programmatic titles.

Other music scores that focus on the concert etudes include the second volume of *Works for Piano Solo*, edited by Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szelényi;²⁷ the fourth volume of *Franz Liszt: Klavierwerke*, edited by Emil von Sauer;²⁸ and *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo*, published by Belwin Mills.²⁹ Pedal marks are not indicated consistently in *Works for Piano Solo*. For example, there are no pedal marks in "La leggierezza," but there are clear pedal indications in "Waldesrauschen." This edition also offers variations for extending the cadenza in "Un sospiro." Furthermore, it sometimes gives suggestions for performance. *Franz Liszt: Klavierwerke* does not contain "Ab irato." Compared with

²⁶ Ferruccio Busoni, V.

²⁷ Franz Liszt, *Studies II*, vol. 2 of *Works for Piano Solo*, ed. Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szelényi (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1971), 3-65.

²⁸ Franz Liszt, *Etudes*, vol. 4 of *Franz Liszt: Klavierwerke*, ed. Emil von Sauer (Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1917), 163-215.

²⁹ Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo* (Melville, NY: Belwin Mills, 1970), 57-87.

Works for Piano Solo, there are fewer explanatory footnotes. *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo* only includes *Trois études de concert*. The pedal and dynamic marks are detailed, but sometimes quite personal, in comparison to the other two editions.

The Pianist's Craft: Mastering the Works of Great Composers, edited by Richard Paul Anderson, is a compilation of essays concerning piano performance. In the essay "Color and Gesture in the Piano Music of Franz Liszt," Timothy Shafer defines Liszt's color as "the management and balance of both vertical and linear sound," which relies on the orchestration, dynamics, texture, melody, and harmony. Shafer describes two categories of gesture—dramatic and virtuosic. The former has recitative-like character while the latter is associated with advanced technique.³⁰ Although the author uses examples other than the *Six Concert Etudes*, his pedagogical procedures could be applied to the six pieces in the present study.

August Göllerich was Liszt's student and secretary during his last two years. In *The Piano Master Classes of Franz Liszt, 1884-1886: Diary Notes of August Göllerich*, he records the dates of Liszt's master classes, lists of performers, the works they performed, and the thoughts and suggestions that Liszt provided.³¹ It seems to concentrate more on expression, clean touch, and tempo than on technique in the book. Although the content about the concert etudes is limited, the book is valuable for providing original reflections directly from Liszt.

³⁰ Timothy Shafer, "Color and Gesture in the Piano Music of Franz Liszt," in *The Pianist's Craft: Mastering the Works of Great Composers*, ed. Richard Paul Anderson (Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 106-17.

³¹ August Göllerich, *The Piano Master Classes of Franz Liszt, 1884-1886: Diary Notes of August Gollerich*, ed. Wilhelm Jerger, trans. Richard Louis Zimdars (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 31.

Another book referring to piano performance is Charles Rosen's *Piano Notes: The World of the Pianist*, which is praised by *The New York Times* as "a fascinating analysis of a performer's relationship to his instruments."³² Regarding Liszt, Rosen mostly discusses his teaching methods and pedaling. Also, there is a specific paragraph comparing Chopin's and Liszt's etudes.³³ Rosen's discussion provides valuable understanding of Liszt's performance style, which is useful for Chapter Four in the present study.

With regard to dissertations and journals, many scholars trace the evolution of the etude as a genre or consider Liszt's *Transcendental Etudes* and *Paganini Etudes*. Even if there are some articles focused on the concert etudes, it is rare to find material related to "Ab irato" or *Zwei Konzertetiden*. Ching-Ling Yang's "The Development of the Piano Etude from Muzio Clementi to Anton Rubinstein: A Study of Selected Works from 1801 to 1870" defines "etude" in the opening chapter and introduces the concert etudes, except "Ab irato," in Chapter Six, "Concert Work / Masterpieces of the Genre."³⁴ Rachel Beatrice Morin's "Progressive and Traditional Elements in the *Trois Études de Concert* by Franz Liszt" compares variation technique among Liszt, Bach and Beethoven; it also provides clear structural analysis and discusses progressive features of the three concert etudes with form and score illustrations.³⁵ Another dissertation, "A Study of the Technical and Stylistic Innovations of Franz Liszt as Demonstrated in an Analysis of

³² Charles Rosen, back cover to *Piano Notes: The World of the Pianist* (New York: Free Press, 2002).

³³ Charles Rosen, 30, and 210-11.

³⁴ Ching-Ling Yang, "The Development of the Piano Etude from Muzio Clementi to Anton Rubinstein: A Study of Selected Works from 1801 to 1870" (DMA diss., The University of North Carolina, 1998), 1-2, and 206-9.

³⁵ Rachel Beatrice Morin, "Progressive and Traditional Elements in the *Trois Études De Concert* by Franz Liszt" (DMA diss., University of Iowa, 2008), 69-100, and 130-50.

Selected Etudes” by Wilson Legarea McIntosh, deals with Liszt’s contributions to technique and harmonic language; he chooses “Un sospiro” and “Waldesrauschen” as two of the case studies which explore Liszt’s creative techniques and styles.³⁶ Richard Bass’s article “Liszt’s *Un sospiro*: An Experiment in Symmetrical Octave-Partitions” was published in the *Journal of the American Liszt Society*. This article identifies symmetrical divisions of the octaves that are associated with chromatic third relationships in the musical structure of “Un sospiro.”³⁷

There are also a few journal articles in Chinese regarding Liszt’s etudes. Huijie Sun’s “Explore Liszt’s Concert Etude ‘Gnomenreigen’” in the journal *Art and Literature for the Masses* deals with the structure and performance of this concert etude.³⁸ Bing Xu’s “Comparison between Liszt’s and Chopin’s Etudes” in the journal *Explorations in Music* contrasts the two composer’s views of compositional styles and techniques.³⁹

The current study concentrates on pedagogical considerations for the *Six Concert Etudes*, filling a gap in the literature concerning Liszt’s concert etudes in several ways. First, it interprets the programmatic meaning of each etude through the analysis of pianistic techniques, colors, melodies, and harmony. Second, it analyzes the form, theme, and dynamics, reflecting the effect of Liszt’s innovations, including thematic

³⁶ Wilson Legare McIntosh, Jr., “A Study of the Technical and Stylistic Innovations of Franz Liszt as Demonstrated in an Analysis of Selected Etudes” (DMA diss., Columbia University Teachers College, 1983), 191-213, 214-39, and 240-71.

³⁷ Richard Bass, “Liszt’s *Un sospiro*: An Experiment in Symmetrical Octave-Partitions,” *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 32 (July 1992): 16-37.

³⁸ Huijie Sun, “李斯特音乐会练习曲侏儒舞探析” [Exploring Liszt’s Concert Etude Gnomenreigen], *大众文艺* 23 (2012): 11-12.

³⁹ Bing Xu, “肖邦练习曲与李斯特练习曲对比浅析” [Comparison between Liszt’s and Chopin’s Etudes], *音乐探索* S1 (2007): 35-36.

transformation, on the structures. Third, it addresses ways for practicing specific techniques in each etude and applies those techniques to musical expression.

In other words, technical growth is not the primary purpose of these concert etudes. Rather, the significance of these etudes is found in the combination of pianistic technique with elements of musicianship such as phrasing, breathing, layered dynamics, and tempo rubato.

Chapter Three

The Years in Weimar and Rome

This chapter describes the life of a man who was colorful, sensational, and just as human as anyone else. Born half Hungarian and half Austrian, he made all of Europe his home as he traveled and absorbed lasting impressions of nationalist styles.⁴⁰ This man, with his showy pianistic techniques and unique musicianship, was known throughout Europe and beyond for his creative spirit and his love for all art. Later generations would also remember his compositions, his creation of the symphonic poem as a genre, and his use of program music. This man was known to have a fatherly heart, treating his students like family members, and often giving them master classes. In this way he helped them establish their music careers. This man always seemed to be in deep relationships with at least two women at the same time. He experienced all sorts of joys and sorrows in love, and he spent very little time with his children. He suffered the death of two children in the short three years of 1859-62. He had an interest in religion his whole life and he eventually entered a monastery when he moved to Rome, a decision which impacted his music styles in his later years. Franz Liszt, a well-known pianist, composer, Kapellmeister, conductor, teacher, and author, may seem to have had a successful and resplendent life. But hidden beneath the flowery labels is the dramatic life of the man himself, especially during his Weimar period (1848-61).⁴¹

After meeting and falling in love with Liszt in Russia, Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein followed Liszt to take up residence with him in Weimar in February,

⁴⁰ He gave his final concert for pay in 1847. Then he abandoned concert touring and concentrated on composition when he was in Weimar.

⁴¹ There are many ways of dividing Liszt's life periods, according to different scholars and biographers. Since the *Six Concert Etudes* in this study are associated with Liszt's settling down in Weimar and Rome, this chapter will mainly discuss his life, career, and compositions from 1848 to the beginning years of 1860s.

1848. The big house they lived in was called “The Altenburg,” which sat on a hill of the same name and looked over Ilm Park. Although the castle-like house was outside the city of Weimar, it was a good place to view the whole city and was embraced by nature and peace. As though they were husband and wife, Liszt and Carolyne decorated the spacious house with well-chosen furniture, valuable paintings, various books and scores, Beethoven’s death-mask, priceless collections, and seven rare pianos.⁴² Liszt’s life in the Altenburg was well-regulated: he composed in the Blue Room in the morning;⁴³ in the afternoon, some of his students or friends would come to receive their lessons or discuss his score writing or article translations; and in the evening, the couple often invited guests to enjoy house music.⁴⁴ However, though the society was stimulating, it proved to be a restless life for Liszt.

The 19th century is an important chapter in musical history. It is the era of the instrumental music, the age in which composers were publicly regarded as clairvoyant, and a time when middle-class families could afford private music lessons for their children. The high status of instrumental music resulted in the development of orchestral music, chamber music, solo instrumental performance, the construction of instruments, and enhanced instrumental techniques. The ideals of romanticism and nationalism placed greater emphasis on imagination, personal expression, and the promotion of folk culture, which in turn aided the great composers like Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, and Berlioz in creating their individual and unique styles. The concerts, pictures,

⁴² The details of Liszt’s collections of pianos will be discussed in Chapter Four.

⁴³ The Blue Room was Liszt’s study room where he did most of his composing. (from Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 75)

⁴⁴ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 74-9.

sketches, biographies, and public opinions brought these composers high prestige; meanwhile, they were pushed to stand in the center of the storm. On the other hand, the 19th century is also a period of struggle. The bloody air from the European Revolution during 1848-49 filled each street and lane. Patrons could no longer maintain their musicians and the private orchestra disappeared. Composers had to earn their living from other jobs, such as being a teacher, editor, or conductor. As far as the cultural struggle was concerned, the War of the Romantics in the second half of the 19th century showed the conflicts between program music and absolute music, form and content, the oneness and the separateness of the arts, newness and oldness, and revolution and reaction.⁴⁵ Liszt, as an innovator and the undoubted leader of the program-music faction, became an important person who attracted both supporters and opponents during his time in Weimar.

When we consider his historical background, we see that Liszt's life and career in Weimar were full of triumphs and tragedies. Liszt had been appointed as the Kapellmeister in Extraordinary of Weimar since 1842.⁴⁶ At the time he settled down in Weimar, he not only brought the city "modern music,"⁴⁷ but also gradually raised the quality of the music in the city. As a conductor, he served for many festivals, such as Goethe Centennial Festival (1849), Congress of the Music Festival of the Elbe (1856), and Lower Rhine Music Festival (1857). He also worked on a great number of masterpieces from different periods and in diverse genres, such as Handel's oratorio *Messiah*, Bach's Cantata No. 7, *Christ der Herr zum Jordan Kam*, Gluck's opera

⁴⁵ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 338.

⁴⁶ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 95.

⁴⁷ The reason to call it "modern music" is to compare it with the music which preceded that time. Examples of the modern music that Liszt advocated in that era include the new genres like symphonic poems, new forms, advanced harmonies, and unique styles of the music, and new ways to perform the music.

Orpheus and Eurydice, Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, Beethoven's symphonies, Schumann's Concerto for Four Horns, Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah*, Berlioz's symphony *Roméo and Juliette*, the world premiere of Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*, Verdi's opera *Ernani*, and Liszt's own symphonic poems. During this time, most orchestras in small towns or cities were not qualified to perform newer music placed before them.⁴⁸ However, Liszt regarded the orchestra in Weimar as being of high professional quality.⁴⁹ His interpretation of a master's work was unique and based on musical expression. He emphasized techniques fused with musicianship, sectional practice, the color of the sound, and even the sound space during the rehearsals.⁵⁰ For example, he often wrote some metaphor in the score, such as "this entire passage is intended to be a blasphemous mocking laughter, very sharply accentuated in the two clarinets and violas."⁵¹ By means of this method, the members of the orchestra would easily understand how to express a specific sound color or emotion.

As a teacher, Liszt's reputation and virtuosic performance attracted many young men to pursue piano study with him in Weimar. Liszt intimately called his students "the boys," including Hans von Bülow, Carl Tausig, Joachim Raff, Peter Cornelius, Karl Klindworth, Hans von Bronsart, William Mason, and Dionys Pruckner.⁵² He gave fatherly support to these twenty-something "boys." For example, Bülow was never charged a penny for a lesson. From time to time, Liszt even gave these students money and some local students whom he declined to teach himself. At home, he allowed them to

⁴⁸ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 271.

⁴⁹ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 271-2.

⁵⁰ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 276-8.

⁵¹ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 311.

⁵² Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 184.

stay in the guest rooms in the Altenburg; outside, he introduced them to different artists, poets, scientists, and politicians in order to widen their social communication.⁵³ During the individual lessons or master classes, in spite of his virtuoso technique, Liszt gave first rank to musical interpretation.

Liszt's attitude towards technique was that it should be transcended: the mechanics of music are secondary to the interpretation of its content, and the conveying of that content to the feelings of the listeners.⁵⁴

As a composer, he wrote numerous works, both instrumental and vocal, during the 14 years in Weimar, including "12 symphonic poems, 2 huge symphonies, 7 concerto works, over 50 secular vocal items, a large corpus of sacred music, the transcriptions, piano and organ works."⁵⁵ If we consider only the piano output, we see that the great repertoire during this period included *Trois Études de concert* (1845-49), *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (1848-53), *Six Consolations* (1849-50), *Années de pèlerinage: Première Année, Suisse* (1848-53) and *Deuxième Année, Italie* (1859), *Mazurka brillante* (1850), *Études d'exécution transcendante* (1851), *Grandes études de Paganini* (1851), *Two Polonaises* (1850-51), *Sonata in B Minor* (1852-53), *Two Ballades* (1845-48, 1853), *Berceuse* (1854), and *Rhapsodie espagnole* (1858).⁵⁶ Liszt's composing speed was very quick and he often composed in his head. He could even manage different works with divergent characters at the same time.⁵⁷ Moreover, he was an innovator. He created a new orchestral genre, the symphonic poem, which is "a one-movement

⁵³ Alan Walker, 2: 167-190.

⁵⁴ Derek Watson, *Liszt*, 171.

⁵⁵ Derek Watson, *Liszt*, 106.

⁵⁶ As explained in the first chapter, the composing years of Liszt's works are not clear from different scholars. For consistency, the years given in this chapter are all according to Alan Walker's records.

⁵⁷ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 301.

composition, connected in some way with other arts (particularly poetry and painting), and whose internal musical contrasts are held together by thematic metamorphosis.”⁵⁸

The term was used for the first time in public for the performance of *Tasso* in Weimar in 1854.⁵⁹ For some of the symphonic poems, he wrote a preface in collaboration with Princess Carolyne.⁶⁰ He also applied the style and dimension of the symphonic poem to his piano works, character pieces in particular, such as “Vallée d'Obermann” in *Années de pèlerinage: Première Année, Suisse*.⁶¹ Although he was deeply committed to program music, he put more attention to the music rather than the literature or pictorial ideas behind it. Alan Walker stated that:

...these pieces are not ‘representational’ in the strict sense of being about specific things or events.... By giving his works these titles, he is really disclosing the source of his inspiration, which we may accept or lay aside.⁶²

He created new forms through thematic transformation. His favorite compositional technique—thematic transformation—was not only a means of giving unity and coherence to a piece, but also offered diversity to the theme. Furthermore, Liszt’s thematic transformation contributed to his form. For instance, Liszt used five thematic motives based upon different methods of thematic transformation to bring the traditional four-movement sonata to only one movement in his *Sonata in B Minor* for piano. In addition to thematic transformation and new structure, he experimented with revolutionary tonal and harmonic procedure, keeping pace with the progressing

⁵⁸ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 304.

⁵⁹ Alan Walker, *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 307.

⁶¹ *Vallée d'Obermann* (Obermann's Valley) is a great example of thematic transformation. Liszt was inspired from both Lord Byron’s poem and Étienne Pivert de Senancour’s novel of the same title.

⁶² Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 305.

chromaticism over the course of the century. His music also contained many tritones, augmented triads, unresolved seventh and ninth chords, church modes, whole-tone scales, pentatonic scales, Hungarian scales, and juxtaposition of unrelated chords, which influenced a number of 20th-century composers like Debussy and Busoni.

From the view of contemporary people today, Liszt was a trendsetter and his revolutions in music described above are regarded as important contributions. Nonetheless, his “modern music” was not completely accepted during the “War of the Romantics” in the 1850s. The people who were hostile to him included some great musicians like Robert and Clara Schumann, Mendelssohn, Joseph Joachim,⁶³ and Brahms. The main arguments against him consisted of Liszt’s invention of the symphonic poem, development of sonata form, new experiments with harmony, ways of conducting, and his propensity for writing program music. On the other hand, Liszt composed the *Sonata in B Minor* in 1852-53 and dedicated it to Robert Schumann in 1854. He also tried to give friendly help when Schumann was very sick, but what he received from the Schumanns was only a cold attitude. The couple liked neither his personality nor the structural originality and harmonic boldness in his works.⁶⁴ In 1857, Bülow premiered the *Sonata in B Minor* in Berlin. In today’s perspective, this work is a monument in the evolution of the sonata form and should have deserved compliments. However, the public reactions were hissing and stamping from the audience as well as criticism from *Die neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.⁶⁵ The reception of the *Sonata in B Minor* was not the only disappointment Liszt had in 1857; in that same year, he had to confront the failure of the

⁶³ Joseph Joachim (1831-1907), Hungarian, was one of the significant violinists in the 19th century.

⁶⁴ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 341-3.

⁶⁵ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 414.

symphonic poem *Mazeppa* in Leipzig and a fiasco in the first rehearsal of *Dante Symphony*. In 1858, he even had to halt his conducting career because of discord with Franz Dingelstedt⁶⁶ who was the new administrator of the Weimar theatre.⁶⁷ Controversy regarding Liszt's conducting Cornelius's opera *The Barber of Bagdad*, which Dingelstedt opposed before its performance, finally resulted in Liszt's ending his tenure in Weimar.⁶⁸ In addition to the attack on his career, Liszt suffered grief from the death of his son Daniel, who died from tuberculosis in 1859.

At the time he left Weimar, he was already a grandfather, heavy in heart and tired in spirit. The Altenburg was still standing in the woods with memories, peaceful but lonely. Yet life had to continue. Liszt closed the Altenburg in August, 1861, and bade farewell to the success, happiness, and pain of his youth and middle age.⁶⁹

On October 20, 1861, Liszt followed his lover Carolyne to Rome and started preparation for their wedding on his fiftieth birthday (October 22).⁷⁰ Nevertheless, things did not turn out as they had wished. Their perfectly planned wedding was obstructed by Carolyne's ex-husband Prince Nikolaus zu Sayn-Wittgenstein (1812–1864), the Roman Catholic Church, and the Tsar of Russia.⁷¹ It was not the first time that their marriage had been delayed. Finally, Carolyne lost heart and Liszt became an abbé in 1866. The lovers never married and lived in separate apartments in Rome. In 1862, Liszt's eldest daughter

⁶⁶ Franz Dingelstedt (1814-1881) was a German poet, dramatist, and theatre administrator. He attained the position of intendant in Weimar Court Theatre from 1857 to 1867. In fact, Liszt admired Dingelstedt's productions and it was he who asked Carl Alexander (Grand Duke of Weimar) to invite Dingelstedt to be the intendant in Weimar (from Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 484).

⁶⁷ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 488.

⁶⁸ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 494-6.

⁶⁹ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 551.

⁷⁰ Derek Watson, *Liszt*, 120.

⁷¹ The reasons why they could not officially celebrate their marriage are discussed in detail by Alan Walker (see Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 514-28, and 566-82).

Blandine gave birth to her first child and named him Daniel, but the news was bittersweet to Liszt. Blandine never recovered from childbirth and died after three months. Liszt himself barely recovered from this sad event. These tragedies in the 1860s might have induced Liszt to be isolated in personality and more religious in life, which in turn influenced his music styles. The master continued experimenting in music structures and harmonies, but gradually turned to short and unpretentious character pieces, unresolved dissonant chords, vague tonal centers, less-complex textures, and fewer virtuosic techniques.⁷²

⁷² Stewart Gordon, *A History of Keyboard History*, 308.

Chapter Four

Pedagogical Analysis of the *Six Concert Etudes*

Elements of Performing Liszt's Music

During Liszt's peak years as a performer, 1835-1847, his popularity and his reputation for virtuosity extended all over France, England, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Russia and other European countries. He was viewed as a stage hero by the public, nobility and women in particular, in the 19th century. His piano works have long been considered a performance standard for advanced piano students of all ages. Technique, of course, is an indispensable element of performing Liszt's music, especially in his etudes. Other notable performance challenges of Liszt's piano works are found in his tendency towards musicality associated with program music, such as layered dynamics, breathing, appropriate expressions, tempo rubato, and pedaling. This chapter first gives an overview of performing Liszt's concert etudes and the process of polishing a piece and then discusses the details with examples from each concert etude.

Technique

In part through being inspired by Paganini's virtuosic violin music, Liszt introduced double thirds, octave scales, rapid repeated notes, four-octave arpeggios, tremolos, trills, three-hand effects, and many other highly difficult techniques in his piano music. After hearing Chopin's performance, Liszt realized the endless possibilities of timbres from piano sonorities and developed a distinctly orchestral sound for his piano music. When this great composer combined prodigious pianistic technique with a sense of orchestration, he made technique serve the musical content as well as offering his audience infinite space to imagine the picture of the music.

Similarly, it is important for a pianist to marry a mechanical technique to a musical technique. A mechanical technique deals with the muscular movements of fingers, hands, wrists, forearms, arms, shoulders, and even the body. The training for different mechanical techniques includes rhythmic patterns, tempo practice, practice with stops, articulation practice, and practicing wide leaps with open or closed eyes.⁷³ These methods are tedious but necessary. They train the clarity and accuracy of the hand and lay foundations for the musical technique.

A musical technique not only relates to the physical movement, but also connects with the performer's psychology and interpretation of the music, and with the acoustic effect of a piano and performance hall. There are many virtuosic techniques in Liszt's *Six Concert Etudes*, such as the running broken chords with octaves in "Il lamento," irregular rhythmic subdivision in "La Leggerezza," three-hand effect in "Un sospiro," and ostinato with a third in "Waldesrauschen." To blend these difficult mechanical techniques into the musical content, one needs to consider the tone color, orchestration, phrasing, ease of the rhythm, and resonance of the sound—and must implement listening to oneself. Alfred Cortot says: "The characteristic of a great artist is not that he is ignorant of technique but that he forgets about it," and Bertrand Ott explains that the ability to forget about the technique occurs because "music inhabits the heart of the performer and because the workings of an intelligent mechanism can translate that necessity."⁷⁴ For

⁷³ This is accomplished by keeping one's eyes on the chord/note that one is leaping to so that aim improves, and also practicing wide leaps with the eyes closed in order to better internalize the distance of the leaps.

⁷⁴ Bertrand Ott, *Lisztian Keyboard Energy: An Essay on the Pianism of Franz Liszt*, trans. Donald H. Windham (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen, 1992), xiv.

example, when the difficult ostinato with a third in “Waldesrauschen” sounds like the wind in the forest, it is no longer a pure technique, but a dynamic painting.

Phrasing

There are three elements to be noticed in Liszt’s phrasing: large phrases, pulse, and breathing. Most of Liszt’s melodies are lyrical, vocally inspired, and long-breathed, and he presents the musical flow in the large periodic phrases.⁷⁵ The larger the phrases are, the more effectively we can shape the musical expressions and the more clearly we can show the continuity of the music. The continuity of the music is not only derived from the flowing melody, but also comes from the musical pulses. The musical pulse is not necessarily equal to the accent on the downbeat of each measure. According to different structures of melody and rhythm, the musical pulses could be divided into one per bar, two per bar, one per two bars, and so on. The function of a musical pulse is more than that of an accent because it gives energy to the music to move forward, similar to the way a conductor leads the orchestra by his hands. Apart from the pulse, breathing is also significant for the continuation of the music. Ott states that “a pianist’s performance becomes moving only when it breathes like a human organism. The piano and the work to which it gives its tonal energy music both have lungs.”⁷⁶ Similar to the movement of swimming, the purpose of breathing is not to stop the movement, but to have new energy to continue the movement. But in music, the timing of the breath is artistic and

⁷⁵ Kenneth Hamilton, “Performing Liszt’s Piano Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 182.

⁷⁶ Bertrand Ott, xv.

sometimes dramatic. The length and the strength of the musical breath depend on the mood of the phrasing.

Tempo rubato

Literally, rubato is an Italian word which literally means “stolen time.” It is an expressive device to show flexibility by speeding up or slowing down the tempo. There are two types of rubato. In the first type, the melody has freedom of tempo while the accompaniment stays in strict time. This type had been fashionable in the 18th century and was adopted by Chopin in the 19th century. The second type is associated with the romantic style and deals with rhythmic flexibility.⁷⁷ Liszt’s tempo rubato is more likely to be the rhythmic flexibility. Alan Walker mentions Liszt’s definition of the tempo rubato, “gentle crescendos and diminuendos of rhythm.”⁷⁸ Liszt’s student Carl Lachmund also explains Liszt’s rubato:

...quite different from the Chopin hastening and tarrying rubato...more like a momentary halting of the time, by a slight pause here or there on some significant note, and when done rightly brings out the phrasing in a way that is declamatory and remarkably convincing...Liszt seemed unmindful of time, yet the aesthetic symmetry of rhythm did not seem disturbed.⁷⁹

It seems that one needs more spontaneous and improvisatory intuition to play Liszt’s rubato. Making a slight change to an original rhythm will result in greatly different shapes to a phrase. Increasing resistance to a note by half a second could bring hope with

⁷⁷ *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. “Rubato.”

⁷⁸ Alan Walker, Franz Liszt, 2: 321

⁷⁹ Kenneth Hamilton, “Performing Liszt’s Piano Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 182, quoted in Alan Walker, ed., *Living with Liszt from the Diary of Carl Lachmund, an American pupil of Liszt, 1882-84* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995), 53.

bright sunshine; a one-second delay to a rest value between high and low notes could instantly cause the heart to break. Tempo rubato in Liszt's music is like a red spot in a monochrome picture, both eye-catching and also embodying the artistic quality.

Layered Dynamics

Dynamics is a basic element of musical expression. However, for an advanced piano student, it is insufficient to master only the range of the dynamics (e.g., *ppp*, *subito piano*, *sf*, *rfz*, *diminuendo*, etc.). "Layered dynamics" refers to different loudness or the changes of loudness appearing in various musical layers, which leads to the effect of multi-dimensional sound. Although it is impossible for a piano to create sounds from diverse dimensions, it can reveal contrasts of dynamics among different voices, as a painting can contain subjects of unequal sizes between foreground and background.

Many sections in Liszt's *Six Concert Etudes* are linked with layered dynamics, such as the three-hand effect (mm. 3-18) in "Un sospiro" and the polyphonic section (mm. 66-74) in "Il lamento." Both of them deal with the layered dynamics in melody, accompaniment, and bass; the latter example is more complicated because it has two melodies, in soprano and tenor. This is a way to interpret the layered dynamics from the view of verticality, which exemplifies the definition of the term in the first paragraph. At a deep level, one needs to consider the horizontal relationships of layered dynamics between phrases. For instance, there are four phrases in a section and each phrase has to express a *crescendo*. Apart from considering the *crescendo* in each phrase (local dynamics), it is also worthwhile to notice the dynamics of the whole section, which could

be a big *crescendo* or *decrescendo* from the first phrase to the last phrase. The horizontal view helps in analyzing the dynamic structure of a whole piece.

Furthermore, the layered dynamics and tempo rubato supplement each other. Ott discusses four relationships between dynamics and speed: speed and loudness, speed and softness, slowness and loudness, slowness and softness.⁸⁰ But his primary emphasis is on pianistic techniques like using rounded fingers and arched wrists instead of the musical effects from the four groupings. In terms of musicality, *accelerando* with *rinforzando* creates the atmosphere of *agitato*; playing running notes *dolcissimo* achieves the effect of swiftness and lightness; *fff* with resistance often works for the appearance of climax; *ritardando* with *diminuendo* gently drops a hint of the ending of a section or a piece. When tempo rubato is mixed with layered dynamics, the structure of the phrases, themes, and form, as well as the musical expression of the piece, will be clearly presented.

Pedaling

During Liszt's lifetime, the three pedals—sustaining pedal, sostenuto pedal, and soft pedal—were all introduced. But, according to Derek Watson's statement, Liszt had not started using Steinway's sostenuto pedal until 1883.⁸¹ Thus, this pedal would not be appropriate to be used in Liszt's *Six Concert Etudes*. The damper and *una corda* should be carefully used when playing his piano works. Some performers are used to playing his music with full sustaining pedals and overwhelming power. It is true that on one hand Liszt's music demonstrates magnificence, flamboyance, and orchestral sonority. But on

⁸⁰ Bertrand Ott, 202-3.

⁸¹ Derek Watson, 170.

the other hand, his music does not lose lightness, grace, gentleness, or agility, attributes which later exert an impact on impressionistic music.

With respect to the soft pedal, Kenneth Hamilton asserts that Liszt's music needs much more *una corda* than is indicated in his scores.⁸² If Liszt preferred the soft-pedal sonority in the 19th century, present performers should also consider using this pedal when appropriate. The keyboard instruments that Liszt had during the Weimar period mostly have less volume than modern instruments do. Liszt had seven different kinds of pianos when he lived in the Altenburg. There was a Boisselot grand piano in the Blue Room, on which he did most of his composing; an Erard concert grand stood in the main reception room on the ground floor; and the rest of the keyboard instruments he collected were two Viennese grands, Beethoven's Broadwood piano, a spinet that had once belonged to Mozart, and a piano-organ.⁸³ Hamilton points out that Liszt's Erard piano and two Viennese grands can produce purity of tone, but restrain the sound quantity because of their designs. Compared with the modern piano, their hammers are much smaller and the composition of their piano frames is different. Also, Hamilton mentions that both pianos of the two types require "a lighter touch and a shallower fall of key than the average modern concert grand to make virtuoso playing far less arduous."⁸⁴ Virtually all good music yields multiple convincing interpretations and one could also argue that every high-quality instrument offers many individual possibilities of sonority and color. For example, the fact that much of J. S. Bach's keyboard music was intended for

⁸² Kenneth Hamilton, "Performing Liszt's Piano Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 185.

⁸³ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 2: 75-77.

⁸⁴ Kenneth Hamilton, 176-7.

harpsichord contributes to the wide differences we observe among various interpretations of his pieces on modern piano. Even with music as recent as that of Liszt, advanced pianists should at least consider the instruments he knew, along with the context provided by past periods.

Regarding the sustaining pedal, its main functions are to prolong notes that cannot be held by the hands and to increase the timbral resonance of the sound. The topic of using sustaining pedal in music of different periods can be controversial. Hamilton states that Liszt “tended to indicate the use of the sustaining pedal only when the pedaling was not immediately obvious, or in order to underline a dramatic increase in volume” when he composed the *Grandes Etudes*.⁸⁵ On the contrary, Ott discusses that “the evocative titles of Liszt’s piano works give us evidence about the Romantic use of resonance...to refrain systematically from using the [sustaining] pedal seems to be wrong, even in Classical scores.”⁸⁶ Depending on one’s interpretation of a piece, there are many options, including where to use the pedal and how deeply to press it down.

Moreover, it is helpful to modify the use of pedals according to the acoustic effects of a hall and the characteristics of a piano, as Liszt suggests.⁸⁷ To attain some specific sound effects, it is necessary to learn various pedal methods, including tremolo pedal, combination of sustain and soft pedal, *crescendo* and *decrescendo* of the sustaining pedal, melodic pedal, and harmonic pedal.⁸⁸ The pedal can beautify the tone colors and

⁸⁵ Kenneth Hamilton, 186.

⁸⁶ Bertrand Ott, 242.

⁸⁷ Kenneth Hamilton, 187.

⁸⁸ Melodic pedals refer to changes corresponding to the movement of melodic notes, while harmonic pedals relate to the harmonic progression.

vividly produce the sense of picture; it can also destroy the clarity of the music. It is a good helper, but only when we employ it appropriately.

Imagination

As one of the leaders in program music, Liszt endues performers and audiences with lively imagination when playing or listening to his music. Thanks to his love of Goethe, Byron, Shakespeare, Raphael, Michelangelo, various types of mythology, and beautiful scenery all over the world, most of his character pieces have descriptive titles. These titles may limit the space of imagination for some people, but music never frames imagination. Ben Arnold summarizes Liszt's piano music in this way:

His subjects range from the religious to the devilish, the spiritual to the tragic, the political to the ecstatic. He can entice with the most seductive melody or dishearten with the darkest death march. He can paint a picture of a lake or a storm or set out on a spiritual quest for meaning. His piano can emulate the full orchestra or a single violin. He can thrill with the most acrobatic pianistic combinations ever contrived in his time or calm the savage beast with the most poetic and expressive utterances obtainable on the piano.⁸⁹

He is a painter, an architect, a poet, a player, and a circumspective observer, who delicately decorates his music with creativity and experience. In his music, every phrase reveals an element of a story; every chord tells a single color of a picture. The music score is black-and-white, but the imagination is colorful.

⁸⁹ Ben Arnold, "Piano Music: 1835-1861," in *The Liszt Companion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 74-5.

Characteristics of Liszt's Compositional Techniques

From Chapter Three of this study, it is not difficult to see that Liszt paid much attention to interpretation whenever he was conducting an orchestral rehearsal or giving a piano lesson. Interpretation of a score is not only about how to play a unique tone or a musical phrase, but also about how to analyze the structure, form, and harmony in a piece. For an advanced piano student, it is important to understand the compositional technique of an individual composer or a certain period. For example, during the time of polishing a piece, one could ask oneself questions like these: How many themes or motives appear in the composition? What relationship do these themes have with each other? What is the form of the piece? How would I divide it into sections? Where is the climax of the work? What can I learn from playing only the melody and bass lines? What is the relationship among the keys? What is the composer communicating to us when he intentionally uses a “wrong” chord?

When considering the compositional technique of a work, one is learning it at a deep level. It is a high and worthy goal for a performer to establish his or her own unique interpretation without harming the composer's originality, just like what Liszt did when he worked on another composer's masterpiece.

Thematic Transformation and Innovative Form

Thematic transformation is a technique that is “found early in the history of the suite of dance movements,” but “the term is most often applied to music of the 19th century.”⁹⁰ Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Liszt, Berlioz, Wagner, and other composers exploit its possibilities and functions. Schubert uses thematic transformation as the primary vehicle for musical development in the *Wanderer Fantasy*. Wagner translates this process into his characteristic Leitmotif, which represents a particular person, subject, or idea and gives great cohesion between music and drama. Liszt uses this technique to shape the form of his compositions. Ben Arnold indicates that “Liszt composes in many types of forms from traditional binary, ternary, and sonata to unusual and new fusions of forms based on his idea of thematic transformation.”⁹¹ His *Six Concert Etudes* display the diversity of thematic transformation, such as extended and shortened themes in “Waldesrauschen,” recurring theme in different keys in “Gnomenreigen,” and modified theme with varied techniques in “Ab irato.” None of them loses the essential identity of the original theme. Also, most of the concert etudes have unusual forms that are built upon this compositional technique. Liszt usually follows the route of thematic transformation or emotion to mold an innovative form organically, rather than beginning with a clear form and then filling in the content. Some concert etudes may sound like ABA ternary form or rondo form at times; but they are not, as a matter of fact. His innovative forms are sectional and they always seem to have some connection with the traditional forms. For instance, his “Gnomenreigen” has the form

⁹⁰ *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. “Transformation of themes.”

⁹¹ Ben Arnold, 75.

ABA¹B¹CA²B²Coda, which is based on the rondo form. Furthermore, it seems that Liszt likes the monothematic idea because he often creates relationships between the themes within a piece, which can create confusion regarding the form. For example, the B theme derives from part of the A theme in “Un sospiro.”

Chromaticism

Chromaticism was another fashionable compositional technique in the 19th century. Seeking ever more intense emotional expression, an increasing number of composers realized the emotive power of using chromatic chords in addition to the functional system of diatonic chords. Moreover, the romantic composers took the technique even further, for example with chromaticism that does not belong to a single key—linear harmony.

In Liszt’s *Six Concert Etudes*, he flexibly exerts chromaticism in melody or accompaniment, often within a tonal center but sometimes using non-functional chords. In the first theme of “Il lamento,” he mixes the chromatic scale and diatonic scale A^b Major for the melody while using linear harmony for the accompaniment part (Musical Example 4.1). Similarly, the mixture of the chromatic scale and diatonic scale is applied to the bass in “La leggerezza” and the main theme in “Waldesrauschen.” Linear harmony also occurs in the accompaniment part in “Gnomenreigen” (mm. 31-32).

Chromatic scale

Allegro cantabile

appassionato con tenerezza

A^b Major scale

Linear harmony

Musical Example 4.1, “Il lamento”: Chromaticism in T₁ (mm. 4-8)⁹²

Chromatic harmony is not the only technique that he uses for the accompaniment. In “Ab irato,” when the main theme appears the third time, Liszt chooses a running and interrupted chromatic scale for the accompaniment (Musical Example 4.2).

Musical Example 4.2, “Ab irato”: Chromatic accompaniment (mm. 31-34)

In addition, he likes showing virtuosity through chromatic scales, such as the cadenza in “Un sospiro” (Musical Example 4.3), the transition in 2/4 time in “Gnomenreigen” (mm. 33-35), and many of the running notes in “La Leggerezza.”

⁹² For consistency, the score excerpts used in this study are all from Busoni’s 1910-1911 edition.

Musical Example 4.3, “Un sospiro”: Cadenza (m. 37)

Furthermore, he uses chromaticism modulations, such as the sequential phrases in “Il lamento” (mm. 66-71) and in “La Leggerezza” (Musical Example 4.4).

Musical Example 4.4, “La leggerezza”: Chromaticism (mm. 31-33)

Chromatic scales and harmonic progressions are everywhere in Liszt’s music, but he also exploits other divisions of an octave in his works, such as the pentatonic scale in “Un sospiro” (main theme) and the octatonic scale in the melodic notes of “Waldesrauschen” (mm. 45-52), the bass notes in “La Leggerezza” (mm. 37-40) as well as the bass notes in “Un sospiro” (mm. 66-73). This again exemplifies the diversity of Liszt’s compositional techniques.

Other Compositional Techniques

Interpretation of the structure of a piece is helpful for understanding the dynamic plan (e.g., a layered *crescendo* to the climactic moment), the design of the tempo rubato (e.g., dramatically timing the approach to the reprise of the main theme), and memorization. Understanding the methods of thematic transformation is useful for making contrasts with respect to musicality when the theme returns multiple times. Apart from these, it is also essential to analyze the tonal plan, texture, and harmony; doing this informs the ways that a performer may change the colors in a piece.

Regarding the tonal plan, the use of descending-third tonal relationship is a favorite technique of Liszt's; this occurs in addition to chromaticism, which was adopted earlier by Schubert and Schumann. From a microscopic view, its function is to modulate within a section or to change the harmony within a phrase, such as A minor-F minor-C[#]/D^b minor in “La Leggerezza” (Musical Example 4.5) and D^b-B^b-G^b-E^b in “Un sospiro” (Musical Example 4.6), respectively.

Musical Example 4.5, “La leggerezza”: Descending-third relationship (mm. 76-78)

Musical Example 4.6, “Un sospiro”: Descending-third relationship (mm. 70-71)

The scholar Richard Bass even analyzes “Un sospiro” on the principle of symmetrical octave-partitions. In his article, he equally divides an octave by major thirds (C-A^b-F^b/E-C) or minor thirds (C-A-F[#]-D[#]/E^b-C) at first. Based on this division, he symmetrically adds some passing notes between these thirds. The results become a whole-tone scale (C-B^b-A^b-G^b-F^b/E-D-C) based on major thirds and an octatonic scale (C-B^b-A-G-F[#]-E-D[#]/E^b-D^b-C) derived from minor thirds. In measure 66-73 of “Un sospiro” (Musical

Example 4.7), Liszt wrote the bass notes of the left hand in the order of a descending octatonic scale (**D^b**-C^b-**B^b**-A^b-G-F-E-D-**D^b**). But the bass notes on the downbeat also form the descending minor third relationship (notes in bold).

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano piece. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The bass line (left hand) is the focus, showing a descending octatonic scale. The first system is marked 'armonioso'. The second system is marked 'poco a poco ral -'. The third system is marked 'len - tando' and 'più lento', with a 'quasi Arpa' section. Blue boxes highlight specific bass notes: D-flat in the first system, B-flat in the second, and D-flat in the third.

Musical Example 4.7, “Un sospiro”:

Octatonic scale and descending-minor-third relationship in bass (mm. 66-71)

From a macroscopic perspective, Liszt arranges the main sections in a whole piece with the tonal plan of a descending cyclic third relationship, such as D^b-A^b-F-(c[#])-D^b in “Un sospiro.” Additionally, he uses ascending and descending third relationships for the tonalities of the first six pieces in *Deuxieme Années, Italie* (1859).

Regarding texture, the trinity of melody, bass and fill-in is the most common vertical structure in many romantic-style works, including much of Liszt’s piano music.

But it is also worth mentioning other textures that Liszt uses in the *Six Concert Etudes*, such as polyphony in “Il lamento” and homophony in “Waldesrauschen.” In “Il lamento,” his counterpoint that under the sustained triplets (mm. 66-75) modulates step by step in order to increase the musical intensity before the climax part. In “Waldesrauschen,” he uses and develops the ostinato as the accompaniment throughout the piece, which transparently describes the motions from murmurings to waving of the leaves.

On the subject of harmony, some particular chords, such as the augmented sixth chords and the dominant ninth chords, foretell the key change, the color change, or the coming of the climax. The emphasis on these chords or the resistance to them is important in performance. Another technique related to harmonic function is the pedal point that mostly occurs on the dominant note of the new key for the next section (e.g. C[#] pedal point as the dominant note of F[#] major key in “Gnomesreigen,” mm. 103-116). No matter what dynamic level in a certain section or phrase, the sustained notes must be heard clearly. Also, a good performance is grounded on the concern of designed dynamics and tempo rubato between the repeated notes. Usually, the *poco crescendo* and growing longer resistances are practical for the dominant pedal point that appears before the recapitulation of a main theme.

Pedagogical Analysis

For each of the *Six Concert Etudes*, we can now examine four performance-related aspects: publication history and programmatic meaning of each concert etude; the structure of each piece, with tables illustrating the relationships of theme, key and dynamics; main technical problems as well as practical ways to resolve them; and score analysis of Liszt's compositional and performance styles.⁹³ In these score excerpts, each color represents one performing element (Table 4.1). Some of the pieces are built on multiple motives (e.g., three motives in “La leggierezza”); these motives are circled in different colors.

Color	Represented performing element
Red/orange	Generally, the melodic notes are squared in red. In a polyphonic texture, another melodic line will be squared in orange.
Dark blue	Bass line
Shallow blue	Phrasing, including breathes (∨) and pulses (>)
Pink	Dynamics
Dark green	Tempo rubato
Shallow green	Technical issues
Black	Pedal

Table 4.1: Comparison table of colors and represented performing elements

⁹³ The publication information is based on Alan Walker's research, primarily his three-volume biography of Liszt.

Ab irato

❖ Publication information and description of title

“Ab irato” is a Latin phrase that literally means “in a rage, or in a fit of temper.”⁹⁴ The precursor of this piece is Liszt’s *Morceau de salon, étude de perfectionnement de la Méthode des méthodes* (*Etude of Perfection from Method of the Methods*, S. 142) which is an educational work published by Moscheles and Féis in 1840. In 1852, Liszt revised “Morceau de salon” and changed the title to “Ab irato”; this version was published by Schlesinger in Berlin.

In reference to the similarities, the two versions are both based upon an impetuous motive in triplets. Both versions include a lyrical section with running notes as accompaniment. Derek Watson states that “both versions contain a theme (at the change to E major) which is used in *Les Préludes* (bar 346 in the symphonic poem).”⁹⁵

As for the differences, “Ab irato” starts and ends with *Presto*, with a contrasting lyrical section in E major (mm. 87-102), marked *Più moderato* and in 2/4 time; by contrast, the “Morceau de salon” does not show any tempo or meter changes. Moreover, the “Morceau de salon” (96 measures) is shorter than “Ab irato” (124 measures). For example, Liszt changed and extended the ending of the *presto* section in “Ab irato.” Musical Examples 4.8.1 and 4.8.2 show the contrast between the two pieces at that point in the work.

⁹⁴ Sacheverell Sitwell, *Liszt*, rev. ed. (London: Cassell, 1955), 192.

⁹⁵ Derek Watson, *Liszt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 227.

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system shows a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note bass line and a vocal melody with eighth-note runs. The second system shows the piano part becoming more rhythmic with chords, while the vocal part has a melodic line. Performance markings include *sempre più forte*, *ritenuto*, and *f dolce leggerissimo*. A key signature change to E major is indicated at the end of the second system.

Musical Example 4.8.1, “Morceau de salon”: The ending before the lyrical section in E major
(mm. 54-62)

8^{va}...

stringen - do

ff

rinforz.

p

sempre staccato

dim. - - - rit.

E major

Musical Example 4.8.2, “Ab irato”: The ending before the lyrical section in E major (mm. 58-86)

Technically, the first version seems more difficult than the second version. For instance, the opening phrase (mm. 1-6) in the “Morceau de salon” is played the left hand alone, requiring rapid broken chords and octaves (Musical Example 4.9.1). Such a passage can lead to physical tension, especially in *presto* tempo. By contrast, in “Ab irato” Liszt requires crossed hands, rather than octaves in one hand; he also adds *poco rit.* near the end of measure 4. The revised distribution between the hands makes physical tension less likely and helps the melodic notes and bass notes be clearer as well (Musical Example 4.9.2).

Musical Example 4.9.1, “Morceau de salon”: Opening phrase (mm. 1-8)

Musical Example 4.9.2, “Ab irato”: Opening phrase (mm. 1-9)

Furthermore, the articulation of the “Morceau de salon” contains both *staccato* and *staccatissimo* while “Ab irato” only deals with *staccatissimo*. *Staccatissimo*, compared to *staccato*, has even shorter note durations and sounds extremely separated and distinct. Integrated with the fast tempo and octave-writing, this music is aptly given such a forceful, impulsive and irate title.

❖ Structure

“Ab irato” has a simple binary form: AB+Coda. Section A is in the key of E minor, while section B and Coda are in E major. The first section can be divided into two parts: “a” and “a¹.” Along with material “b,” it looks like a bar form, aab. Regarding the length of each part, “b” is the shortest one; “a¹” expands the length of “a” and is the largest one. Concerning the dynamic plan, we see terraced dynamics and gradual changes of the dynamics. In section A, “a¹” (*pp* – *ff*) enlarges the dynamic range of “a” (*p* – *f*) in addition to the length. The whole section sounds up and down through both dramatic and gradual changes of the dynamics, as if somebody’s anger is ignited little by little. On the other hand, section B is melodious, warm, and expressive, with big contrasts to section A in mood, tempo, theme, and meter. Subsequently, the Coda returns to impassioned emotion and again achieves *fortissimo*.

Function	A		B	Coda
Material	a	a ¹	b	Derive from “a”
Key	e -- modulation	e -- modulation	E	E
Measure	1-30	30-87	88-104	104-125
Dynamic range	<i>p</i> – <i>f</i>	<i>pp</i> – <i>ff</i>	<i>p</i> – <i>f</i>	(<i>f</i>)– <i>ff</i>

Table 4.2, “Ab irato”: Structure

Musical Example 4.10.2, "Ab irato": Various materials based on the motif (mm. 1-3)

Musical Example 4.10.1, "Ab irato": Original motif

Musical Example 4.10.2 (1), "Ab irato": Scales extended from the motif (mm. 65-66, and 104-105)

Musical Example 4.10.2 (2), "Ab irato": Repetition of the motif (mm. 73-76)

Musical Example 4.10.2, "Ab irato": Various materials based on the motif (mm. 12-13)

Musical Example 4.10.2, "Ab irato": Various materials based on the motif (mm. 21-23)

Musical Example 4.10.3, "Ab irato": Different accompaniment textures for the motif (mm. 7-9, 31-32, and 39-40)

Musical Example 4.10.3, "Ab irato": Different accompaniment textures for the motif (mm. 44-45)

Musical Example 4.10.3, "Ab irato": Different accompaniment textures for the motif (mm. 55-57)

This work provides good examples of one of Liszt's favorite compositional techniques—thematic transformation. The original motif includes six eighth notes; the three ascending notes are exactly the same pitches as the three descending notes (Musical Example 4.10.1). Liszt composes new material based on this motif, through the repetition of the motif or the scale, and with new melodies or chords extended from the motif (Musical Example 4.10.2). He also creates various techniques through these materials (Musical Example 4.10.3). For instance, the opening theme (mm. 1-6) is played by crossed hands with broken chords on the first notes of the three-note-figures in the left hand; the first note E is on the third beat; it ends in the dominant chord. In measures 7-11, the theme is performed with both hands in standard position with broken chords; the first note E is on the first beat; it suddenly stops on the C minor chord. In measures 31-38, the theme has the accompaniment part—ascending and descending chromatic scales in the right hand, concluding on the dominant chord with a virtuosic five-note scale. In measures 38-42, Liszt gives a similar melody to both hands but broken into sixteenths and alternating the hands.

❖ Main technical issues

As a whole, three technical issues appear in “Ab irato”: crossed hands, successive octaves with *staccatissimo*, and rapid tempo.

The first technical problem happens twice in the piece, in the opening phrase of both materials “a” and “a¹” (mm. 1-6 and 31-37). In material “a,” one needs to realize that both hands play the same melody in measures 1-4 and that there are two bass lines in measures 5-6 (B for the right hand and F[#]-E-C[#]-D[#] for the left hand). To make it easy for

practice, one can reverse the hands and play just the melodies without the broken chords; in other words, the right hand plays E3 while the left hand plays E2. Then one can play it with crossed hands as written, but without the broken chords. Eventually one can restore the broken chords in the left hand. One can apply the same practice techniques in “a¹” for the purpose of hearing the lines and desired shapes first.

Large numbers of successive octaves with *staccatissimo* are appropriate ways to show anger in this piece, but they are especially challenging for pianists who have small hands. Stiffness of the forearm is a common problem that performers encounter when attempting this kind of technique in a fast tempo. In addition, missing notes or wrong notes may also become evident during the performance. To resolve these problems, Ott suggests that “the arm should always remain suspended and light” when playing connected octaves and chords.⁹⁶

In passages of a succession of octaves, the elbow is placed in adduction, slightly suspended (less, however, than in the technique of the fingers), with the trunk back a little more and leaning sometimes to the opposite side of the hand that is playing.⁹⁷

Ott also mentions the “grasshopper movement” for linking two octaves, which requires a “scratching with the finger pads.”⁹⁸ Moreover, whether they are pure octaves (e.g., mm. 25-29) or octaves with chords (e.g., mm. 13-14), “leaning the hand a little toward the fifth finger” will “provide greater elasticity to the wrist on the side of the thumb.”⁹⁹ Thus, we can achieve the goal of releasing at least some of the stiffness in the hands and arms. In

⁹⁶ Bertrand Ott, 225.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 225-6.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 226.

order to make fewer note mistakes at rapid speed, a fixed mold-like hand position and minimal rebounding should be applied.

The third technical issue, rapid tempo, may be the crucial factor that raises the level of the piece. Liszt marked *Presto impetuoso* for section A and *Presto agitato assai* for the Coda. A tempo of at least $\text{♩} = 60$ is necessary for the performance at the advanced level. Four main points can be considered for tempo practice. In the first place, playing single notes with *legato* touch is useful for acquiring a sense of the line. Secondly, practice with various rhythmic patterns is always helpful. Examples of such practice patterns include stopping on the first note of each three-note group, stopping on the second note of each group, and stopping on the third note of each three-note group; one can also stop on the first note of each six-note group. Similarly, it is also useful to repeat the first note of each three-note set, repeat the second note of each set, and repeating the third note of each three-note set. These rhythmic patterns are effective tools both hands separately and also hands together. Thirdly, the sense of leading to the downbeat will make the tempo steady. Last but not the least, the metronome set from slow to fast also works for achieving a stable tempo. For example, if the final tempo is $\text{♩} = 76$, it is appropriate to set the beginning tempo at half the final tempo, which is $\text{♩} = 38$. Then the speed should be added gradually to the final tempo, such as $\text{♩} = 48, 56, 63, 69$, and 76.

“Ab irato” is the shortest piece among Liszt’s concert etudes, but not the easiest one to play. It is more appropriate for graduate piano students or for the undergraduate student with outstanding technique and energy.

❖ Sectional analysis

Section A: material “a” (mm. 1-30)

Melody and bass

As already stated in the section entitled “Structure,” Liszt derives most of the melodies in this piece from the original six-note motif. In material “a,” the melodies are often played by both hands. The performer needs to emphasize the melodic notes there are broken chords, thirds, and the octaves with chords.

The bass notes before measure 19 either follow the harmonic progression or stay on one pitch to show the modulation (e.g., E2-D2-F[#]2 in mm. 7-9, 11-15, and 15-18 respectively). After measure 19, the bass line becomes a chromatic scale, first descending then ascending. The B^b/A[#] in measures 21-25 functions as an axis between the descending and ascending chromatic scales. Material “a” ends on the bass note E, which is the tonic note of the E minor key. The following chord, however, is not the tonic chord as expected. It is a fully diminished chord that sounds unharmonious and overwhelming, as if somebody is exasperated.

Practicing only the melody and bass lines without the supporting material is beneficial to voicing, shaping, and memorization; this technique is effective for each section and each piece in this set.

Phrasing

How the phrases should be divided depends in part on personal interpretation. Such decisions need to take the different layers of the phrase structure into account. In this part, there are at least two ways to divide the 30 measures: 6+15+9 or 6+5+2+2+2+4+2+2+5. Both ways have irregular phrase structure and agree with the six

measures for the first phrase. Since the numbers of the measures in most phrases are uneven, one pulse per measure will avoid the problem of the irregularity. In terms of the differences, the first way has three longer phrases and each phrase ends at the peak (Musical Example 4.11). Although it may be hard to breathe in the second and third phrases, it works better for the continuation of the music. The second way has nine phrases and each phrase starts with the main motif. Working with such short phrases is good for breathing but it might weaken the fluency of the phrasing. To draw on the strong points of both ways, one can combine the two to be $6+(5+2+2+2+4)+(2+2+5)$, which signifies a longer breath between the big phrases and only a quick breath between the small phrases.

(mm. 5-6)

(mm. 19-21)

(mm. 29-30)

Musical Example 4.11, “Ab irato”: Three peaks in material “a”

Layered dynamics

In addition to the gradual or sudden dynamic changes within one phrase, such as the *crescendo* and *decrescendo* in measures 9-11, and the *rinforzando* contrasted with the *piano* in measures 21-24, this material also displays increasing volume and more powerful orchestration for the whole 30 measures. In other words, however many detailed dynamic changes happen during the 30 measures, material “a” sounds louder and louder, from only bass groups in the first phrase, to all the string instruments in the second long phrase, then to the whole orchestra in the third long phrase. Each peak has more volume and more intensity than the previous one. The performer needs to communicate this increasingly-aggressive feeling to the audience.

Tempo rubato

The main function of tempo rubato in this material is to make the three peaks obvious, such as the *poco rit.* in the end of the first phrase and the feeling of resistance before reaching the downbeat chord in the last measure of the second phrase. In the third long phrase, taking time before the third beat along with dropping back to the *piano* in measure 26 will provide room to grow toward the biggest moment in this material, mm. 29-30. Furthermore, in order to have more impulsive force for the moment, one can make the tempo *agitato* from the third beat in measure 26 to measure 28, then apply a short resistance (S. R.) going towards the E octave and a relatively longer resistance (L. R.) leading into the full diminished seventh chord in measure 29 (Musical Example 4.12).

Pedal

Because of the articulations, (*staccato* and *staccatissimo*), most of the time there is no need for full, deep use of pedal in this material. Pedaling like a dragonfly skimming the surface of the water is suggested for the chords with accented marks. But it is better to use deeper pedals for the successive accents, such as measures 5-6. Other places to be emphasized with deeper pedals are the chords marked *sforzando* or *rinforzando* (Musical Example 4.12). In measures 26-30, gradually deeper pedals will be helpful for the effect of arriving at the peak (Musical Example 4.12).

The image shows a musical score for the piano accompaniment of Franz Schubert's 'L'Allegretto'. The score is in 3/4 time and the key of D major. It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains measures 109 through 112, and the second system contains measures 113 through 116. The notation includes various dynamics such as piano (p), piano forte (p x), and rinforzando (rinforz.), as well as articulation marks like accents and slurs. The bottom system includes green annotations 'L. R.' and 'S. R.' above specific notes. The page number (109) is visible at the end of the first system.

Musical Example 4.12, “Ab irato”: Damper pedals in the third phrase of material “a” (mm. 21-30)

The Musica Budapest edition marks a pedal from the downbeat of measure 29 to the downbeat of measure 30.¹⁰⁰ This may give more power to the last full diminished chord with fermata, but it loses the meaning of the rests after the E octave.

Section A: material “a¹” (mm. 31-87)

Technical issues

Apart from the crossed hands and the successive octaves with *staccatissimo* that were previously discussed in the overview, two other techniques are worth noticing. One is the virtuosic passage in measures 37-38, which may cause problems such as missing notes and inequality among the notes regarding the note value or dynamics. To avoid these problems, it is better to play the five-note scale G-B C-D[#]-F[#] by two hands in turn. The fingering indicated on the score of the Busoni edition is not the only way to play the passage (Musical Example 4.13.1). The Musical Example 4.13.2 shows different fingerings and different ways to change the hands. Also, practice with various rhythmic patterns will be good for balance between the notes.

¹⁰⁰ Franz Liszt, *Studies II*, vol. 2 of *Works for Piano Solo*. ed. Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szélenyi (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1971), 40.

Musical Example 4.13.1, “Ab irato”:

Five-note scale in material “a¹” from Busoni edition (mm. 35-39)

Musical Example 4.13.2, “Ab irato”: Five-note scale in material “a¹”

with different fingering and specific method of hands alternation (mm. 35-39)

Another technical issue is found in the cross rhythm between the hands in measures 45-46 and 49-50 (Musical Example 4.14). Although the one eighth note against two sixteenth notes looks simple, in fact it is not easy to match the notes due to different

divisions of the beats between the two hands. The left hand is still in 6/8 time while the right hand sounds as though it is now in 3/4 time. A good way to practice this is to start with one voice only and then add one new voice at a time. First of all, play the melodic notes of the left hand (B4-C5-D5-D5-C5-B4-G4-A4-B4-D5) together with the highest voice of the right hand (D7-B6-G6-D6-B5-G5). Be sure that the two hands show their individual metrical accents. Then play the thirds with good voicing on the left hand and the highest voice on the right hand. Finally, play as written. However, it is not ultimately a musically satisfying technique. To polish it, one needs to emphasize more of the pulse (one pulse per measure) instead of the accents of the different time signatures so that the music on the two hands can be blended into each other. Moreover, playing the right hand with descending volume while the left hand is played with ascending volume will create layered dynamics.

Musical Example 4.14, “Ab irato”: Cross rhythm between two hands (mm. 44-50)

Neither version of measures 51-53 is particularly difficult (Musical Example 4.15). The original one deals with the chromatic scale while the Ossia uses broken

octaves in alternating registers. Regarding tempo, it may be easier to play the chromatic scale with *accelerando*. In terms of musicality, the Ossia sounds more vigorous because of the jumping and the lower bass notes.

Musical Example 4.15, “Ab irato”: Two ways of performance (mm. 51-53)

Phrasing

Similar to material “a,” there are several ways to divide the phrases. Setting the phrases as 8+(5+2+2+2+4)+(2+2)+(2+3)+8+(6+4+7) offers benefits both for breathing and also for continuity of the music.

Layered dynamics

As mentioned before, material “a¹” not only extends the length of material “a,” but also enlarges the range of the dynamics from *p-f* to *pp-ff*. With respect to the principle dynamic structure of this material, it gradually gets louder until the climax passage in measures 63-70 and then becomes softer right after the fermata (m. 70).

In the sense of layered dynamics, there are always some circuitous dynamic changes during a big *crescendo* or *decrescendo*. For example, a long, steady *crescendo* to

create tension in measures 53-62 before the climax might be reasonable. Nevertheless, since the phrases (2+2) and (2+3) include two repeats, one might instead make more dynamic contrasts for the four small phrases instead of a single extended *crescendo* (Musical Example 4.16). The second way will probably be more effective to perform as well as to convey the character of the piece.

Musical Example 4.16, “Ab irato”:

Dynamic contrasts before the climax in material “a¹” (mm. 51-62)

Another example related to horizontal layered dynamics is the last phrase after the fermata (mm. 70-87). One can set diverse dynamic levels in each small phrase without

breaking the extended *decrescendo* in the big phrase. Moreover, from the view of the vertical layered dynamics, the bass notes need to be prominent; in fact, they lead the dynamic changes. Furthermore, never stop the music during the rests. In the sense of drama, the “loudest” moment of the piece is the rests with the fermata in measure 70, while the softest is the whole rest with the fermata in measure 87. Also, the *decrescendo* does not end with the E in measure 71; rather, it continues during the rests in measures 70-72 (Musical Example 4.17).

Musical Example 4.17, “Ab irato”: Latent dynamics, breath and pulse (mm. 68-72)

The same concept is appropriate for understanding the notes with long values, such as *decrescendo* for the left hand in measure 79 (Musical Example 4.18).

Musical Example 4.18, “Ab irato”: *Decrescendo* for the dotted half note (m. 79)

Tempo rubato

In the climax passage, there are three *fortissimos*, the third time (m. 65) is the loudest one and it needs prior resistance because it changes the direction of the melody instead of repeating the previous measures. Although the climax ends with a fermata, there is no need to stay too long. A big breath is enough before playing the next notes. That big breath is also the first pulse for the next phrase (Musical Example 4.17).

Pedal

The pedaling in most phrases of material “a¹” is consistent with the way it is treated in material “a” except for the three extended phrases: the cadenza-like ending of the first phrases, the climax passage, and the added part after the climax. For the purpose of making wave-like effect for the virtuosic passage in measures 37-38, a long half pedal is suggested to be placed as shown in Musical Example 4.19.

Musical Example 4.19, “Ab irato”: Damper pedals for virtuosic passage (mm. 37-38)

In the climax passage, two $\frac{3}{4}$ pedals per bar will work for measures 63-67. But when both hands play the notes in the lower registers, the sound will be heavier and has more resonance, especially with the marks *rinforzando*. Thus, pedaling with frequent changes (P~~~~) is needed in measures 68-69 (Musical Example 4.20).

Musical Example 4.20, “Ab irato”: Damper pedals in climax passage (mm. 67-69)

There is no need to use the damper pedals in the last phrase(s) after the climax. Four reasons support that suggestion: (1) the articulation of *staccatissimos*; (2) the very low registers; (3) the soft dynamics *piano*; (4) and the unharmonious 9th chords. A slight use of the damper pedal may work depending on the resonance of the performance space. However, the *una corda* can be applied here to change the colors for the repeated phrases.

Section B (mm. 88-104)

Melody and bass

In spite of the double bar at the end of measure 103, section B in E major ends in measure 104. The downbeat G[#] in the right hand is both the beginning note of the Coda and the ending pitch in section B.

This section can be divided into two phrases and three voices. The soprano has the melody in the first phrase (mm. 88-97) while the middle voice displays the melody in the second phrase (mm. 97-104). The first halves of the two phrases are the same; for the second half, the second phrase slightly changes the melodic contour but finally goes back to the G[#] in measure 104 (Musical Example 4.21). Regarding the bass, it leads the dynamic changes even when it repeats the tonic E several times. For instance, in the second phrase (Musical Example 4.21), the three bass notes E (mm. 97-99) get louder

and louder until the bass note G[#] (m. 100). Although there is no note between the G[#] and the C[#] (m. 102), it should be sounded like *decrescendo* between the two notes, which aims to have a new *crescendo* for the next basses A and E (mm. 103-104). The dynamic design of the bass voice will support the expression of the melody.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano and bass. The first system shows a piano staff with complex fingerings (1-5) and a bass staff with a 'crescendo' marking. The second system shows a piano staff with a 'Presto agitato assai.' tempo change and a bass staff with a 'resistance' marking and a 'molto' dynamic marking. Red boxes highlight specific notes and passages, and blue boxes highlight others. A pink line connects the two systems.

Musical Example 4.21, “Ab irato”: The second phrase in section B (mm. 97-104)

Tempo rubato

The connection between measures 103 and 104 is very important. It is not only the biggest moment for section B, but also a turning point regarding the change of tempo (from *Più moderato* to *Presto*), meter (from 2/4 to 6/8), and emotional expression (from *dolce* to *agitato*) between section B and the Coda. Liszt marked accents rather than *ritardando* for the five chromatic notes E-E[#]-F[#]-F^x-G[#]. To create the peak-like effect, one can underscore the five notes through the articulation of tenuto and give resistance to the last note G[#]. One needs to set the new tempo, meter, and emotion during the time of the resistance instead of from the downbeat in measure 104.

Pedal

The *una corda* is required by Liszt in the first phrase of this section. In order to contrast the dynamics and colors between the two phrases, it is better to release the soft pedal from the transitional accompaniment passage in measures 96-97. The alternation of the damper pedal along with the harmonic change (one pedal per measure) may work better than alternation with the melodic change because of the significance of the bass line. Moreover, to hit the same target, the pedals should contain the sound of the bass notes within the rolled chords in the second phrase.

Coda (mm. 104-125)

The coda is a hugely climactic section of this piece, sounding like someone ablaze with anger. Many repeated passages, ascending scale-like octaves, descending arpeggios, alternation between tonic and dominant harmony, and the last heavy and powerful chords in the low register reinforce the bursting fury.

Phrasing

The whole section can be divided into five phrases: 4+4+4+4+6, which is more periodic than the previous sections. Since the Coda sounds a little faster than section A, it is suggested to take only quick breaths between the first three phrases for the purpose of the musical continuation. Another way to promote the flow of the music is to apply one pulse for two measures in this section. But there is an exception in the fourth phrase, which should be approached with resistance and executed with one pulse per three measures, continuing in this way in order to complete the arpeggio passage and then to arrive at the peak E on the next pulse (Musical Example 4.22). A big breath is also

The image displays a musical score for the song 'L'Espresso' by Debussy, featuring piano and vocal parts. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. The piano part is in the upper system, and the vocal part is in the lower system. The score includes performance annotations such as 'resistance' (green arrows pointing to specific notes), 'un poco ritenuto' (blue wavy line), and 'ff marcatisimo' (black text). The score is divided into two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system shows the piano part with a 'resistance' annotation on the first measure. The second system shows the vocal part with a 'un poco ritenuto' annotation and a 'resistance' annotation on the first measure. The piano part in the second system also has a 'resistance' annotation on the first measure. The score ends with a 'ff marcatisimo' annotation.

Layered dynamics

72

Musical Example 4.23, “Ab irato”: Dynamic plan in the third phrase in Coda (mm. 112-115)

Il lamento

❖ Publication information of and description of title

According to Alan Walker's records in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001), the *Trois Études de concert* (S. 144) was composed between 1845 and 1849. Both Leipzig and Paris editions published the work in 1849 and the latter named it as *Trios caprices poétiques* with the individual titles—"Il lamento," "La leggierezza," and "Un sospiro." The three etudes were dedicated to Liszt's uncle, Eduard Liszt (1817-79).¹⁰¹

The first etude, in A^b major, is the longest among the *Six Concert Etudes*. The literary meaning of the title is "the lament," referring to the emotions of sorrow, grief, and mourning. One can probably connect this kind of emotion with a tragic personal experience or even, in view of the composition date, with societal events such as the European economic crisis (1847) or the European Revolution (1848-49). Although the descriptive subtitle is not given by Liszt, the sigh motif constructed by three descending chromatic notes, the successive fully diminished sevenths in the introduction, the shape of the main melody, the surprising appearances of rests and fermatas, the overwhelming chordal climax, and the peaceful ending seem to depict contradictory and complex moods, disappointment interwoven with hope, lamenting mingled with consolation.

¹⁰¹ Alan Walker, "Liszt," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 2001), 14:801.

❖ Structure

This etude is in sonata form, though the two main themes are in remote keys. There are two reasons to analyze it in sonata form: first, it clearly shows five sections – introduction, exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda; second, the recapitulation returns both to the main theme and to the home key A^b major (Chart 1). But it is not a traditional standard sonata form. During the 19th century, many composers tried to modify this form without changing its three main sections or the recurring main theme(s) in the recapitulation. Sonata form has undergone many variations, including the sub-form within a main theme, three main themes in a movement, remote keys between the themes, “wrong” key for the main theme in the reprise, and one missing theme in the recapitulation. In this etude, Liszt constructed a sub-form aba¹ for T₁, but only “a” returns in the recapitulation. Also, in the reprise, T₂ is repeated twice in different remote keys. In the Coda, the introduction reappears incompletely, which results in the effect that the ending echoes with the beginning.

The significant sigh motif (Musical Example 4.24.1) appearing in the first measure is influential to the whole piece, because the two main themes (Musical Example 4.24.2 and 4.24.3) derive from it and the climax (Musical Example 4.24.4) also develops from it. Both themes begin with the three descending chromatic notes but in different moods. T₁ is fragmented with many rests while T₂ is more lyrical and continuing. In T₁, material “a” sounds like sobbing and material “b” seems to convey an anxious state of mind because of the frequent alternation between different registers. It seems that someone is sorrowful about the loss of his lover forever. By contrast, T₂ is relatively calm since the melody mostly stays in one register. It is as if the person is reminiscing about

the precious time with his lover in the past. The three materials “a,” “b,” and “c” vary through thematic transformation, occurring in the later sections: Development, Recapitulation, and Coda. In her dissertation, the scholar Rachel Beatrice Morin also concurs with the sonata-like structural analysis of the piece.¹⁰² However, she describes “three motives—a sigh figure, a descending four-note figure, and a melodic leap—developing separately” instead of two themes in the etude.¹⁰³ Also, she divides the Exposition into several parts which she calls “First Phrase,” “Cadenza,” “Transition,” “Coda,” “Phrase extension,” “Cadenza,” and “Transition.”¹⁰⁴ Moreover, she outlines the development from measures 53 to 90 and the recapitulation from 91 to 140. Since this etude is not based on a traditional form, Ms. Morin’s opinions may also be feasible for the innovative use of sonata form.

¹⁰² Rachel Beatrice Morin, “Progressive and Traditional Elements in the Trois Études De Concert by Franz Liszt” (DMA diss., University of Iowa, 2008), 95-6.

¹⁰³ Rachel Beatrice Morin, 70.

¹⁰⁴ Rachel Beatrice Morin, 95.

Function	Introduction	Exposition				Development			Recapitulation			Coda		
Theme		T ₁				T ₂			T ₁ '	T ₂ '				
Motif	Sigh motif	a	b	a ¹	c	a ²	b ¹	b ² + sigh motif (climax)	a ³	c ¹	c ² (apotheosis)	c ³	Material from Introduction	a ⁴
Key	A ^b	A ^b		A	G	B	Modulation -- A ^b : V		A ^b	F [#]	B ^b	A ^b		
Measure	1-4	4-12	12-22	22-30	30-41	41-53	53-65	66-91	91-99	99-112	112-132	132-140	140-144	144-154
Dynamic	<i>f</i> ~~~~~					<i>pp</i>	$\angle$	<i>ff</i> $\triangleright$	<i>p</i>	$\angle$	<i>ff</i> $\triangleright$	<i>p</i>	$\angle$	<i>pp</i>

Table 4.3, “Il lamento”: Structure

Musical
Example 4.24.1,
“Il lamento”:
Sigh motif
in Introduction
(m. 1)

Musical
Example 4.24.2,
“Il lamento”:
Sigh motif in T₁
(mm. 4-5)

Musical Example 4.24.4, “Il lamento”:
Sigh motif in Climax (mm. 82-84)

Musical
Example 4.24.3,
“Il lamento”:
Sigh motif in T₂
(mm. 30-31)

In reference to the dynamic structure, this etude starts with passion and ends with quietness. There are two big moments in the Development and Recapitulation sections respectively, which are named as Climax and Apotheosis in the chart. The former is relatively more powerful whereas the latter is more struggling because of the musical texture and rhythm. Regarding the two *pp* moments, one appears in the Development again (mm. 41-53) and the other happens at the end of the piece. Since both softest and loudest parts exist in the Development, there is a huge space for contrast in layered dynamics. In the Exposition, though the main volume is in the range of *forte*, the player is free to shape the phrases using varied dynamic levels that remain within the general character of *forte*. In addition, many dramatic moments (e.g., suddenly from loud to soft, or abrupt silence with rest or fermata) may indicate heartbreak, such as measures 21-22, 51-52, 90-91, and 132-133. In order to express this kind of mood well, not only is controlling the dynamics important, but it is also necessary to handle the timing.

❖ Technical issues

In spite of being the longest one among the *Six Concert Etudes*, “Il lamento” is not the most difficult one in terms of technique. The concern for the musicianship and the interpretation of the score are more important during the performance. It may be more appropriate for a graduate student than an undergraduate student to learn the piece. At advanced level, there are three main technical issues in this etude: voicing, rapid alternation between intervals of fourth and fifth for both hands, and successive big jumps between bass and fill-in or melody and fill-in.

Voicing is not only related to melody, but it is also connected with bass. The bass is the “boss” and it dominates the direction, timing, and dynamics of the phrasing. Before playing all the voices, it is better to practice only melody and bass with musicality. The more familiar one is with these two voices, the easier it is to make them more distinct than other voices when playing all the lines. Physically, it requires more energy to press more heavily on the fingers which have the voice while simultaneously placing less weight on other fingers. Relaxation for the arms is also paramount. Psychologically, clear and relaxed voicing depends on the inner hearing—hearing the notes and the quality of the notes before playing them. One of Liszt’s students Marie Jaëll said upon hearing Liszt, “it is hearing which acts on the finger. It is sufficient to hear a certain way in order to play a certain way.”¹⁰⁵ It is as if to have a plan before doing something, which offers an active attitude to express the music and to anticipate the desired sounds and timing before actually playing the notes.

In the Introduction, there are two chains of fourths and fifths for both hands (Musical Example 4.25). The first alternation of fourths and fifths is marked *accelerando*, which increases the difficulty of the technique. The second one only shows the tempo change *ritenuto* according to the score, but it will sound more emotional if one adds more tempo rubato with expressive dynamics before the *ritenuto*. Four elements need to be noticed for practice: fingering, voicing, connection between the melodic notes, and the use of wrist. The Belwin Mills edition provides fingering suggestions which allow performers to connect the notes in the outer voices, the primary melodic parts.¹⁰⁶ To

¹⁰⁵ Bertrand Ott, xviii, quoted in Hélène Kiener, *Marie Jaëll* (Paris: Falmarion, 1952), 169.

¹⁰⁶ Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo* (Melville, NY: Belwin Mills, 1970), 57.

move flexibly and quickly between the two intervals with relaxed hands, it is better to turn the wrist between left and right. Ott presents four functions of the wrist and explains that “the Lisztian wrist lowers or raises the hand at the extremity of the forearm; it presents a living elasticity because often the thumb and the fifth finger are not very rounded.”¹⁰⁷ Here, the wrist not only helps ease the hands, but also plays the role of transmission in the continuous linking of the fingers (the third function of the wrist that Ott mentions). Concerning the mechanical ways of practice, different rhythmic patterns are efficient for training the flexibility of the fingers as well as the speed; the repetition of the notes in inner voices while sustaining the notes in outer voices is helpful to voicing. To be more musical, one can add dynamic changes and slight accents on the first notes of the triplets when applying these mechanical methods that discussed above.

Musical Example 4.25, “Il lamento”: Pedagogical analysis in Introduction (mm. 3-4)

¹⁰⁷ Bertrand Ott, 165.

The successive big jumps between bass and fill-in lines happen in the climax section (mm. 75-82) while the jumps between melody and fill-in occur in the second recurring of T_2 (mm. 112-128). In the climax, the left hand controls the jump. Since the bass is more important than the fill-in voice, it is wise to emphasize the bass octaves and use the rest of the energy to play the fill-in chords. To avoid missing any notes at fast speed, it is necessary to have a plan for tempo rubato and dynamics. For example in measures 78-82 (Musical Example 4.26), one could make a big *crescendo* for the left hand in the last phrase prior to the *ff*. However, a design of *decrescendo* in measure 79 and a new *crescendo* from *mp* in measures 80-82 may make this passage easier to play without losing the notes. Furthermore, it will create more dramatic and powerful impact for the climax. With respect to the tempo rubato, it is easy to be drive forward in measure 80 because of the dynamic design. Then gradually slowing down in measure 81 and conveying heavy resistance to the E^b octave in measure 82 can be one solution which can decrease the difficulty of this technique. Moreover, doing this enhances the function of the dominant note E^b which anticipates the resolution to the home key in the Recapitulation.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Il lamento" (mm. 78-81). The score is written for a right hand (m.d.) and a left hand (m.g.). The right hand plays a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, often with leaps. The left hand provides a piano accompaniment of sixteenth notes. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). There are also tempo markings: "Driving tempo" and "Slow down". A blue arrow points to a specific measure in the melody.

Musical Example 4.26, "Il lamento": Dynamic and tempo design (mm. 78-81)

In the Reprise, when T_2 appears the second time in B^b major, the right hand has to handle the persistent jumps between melodic notes and part of the accompanying sixteenth notes. The primary difficulties lie in the continuity of the melodic octaves and the rapid speed. The first difficulty can be resolved by means of pedaling on each beat and expressive shapes of the phrasing. A more mechanical way of approaching the second difficulty is to play four or eight sixteenth notes between two hands with various rhythmic patterns at first. Then add the melody to the sixteenth notes. Another way to deal with the technique is "stopping-practice": stop after playing the first notes on both hands in each measure until the hands are relaxed and sufficiently prepared for the next sixteenth notes. It is also appropriate to play with metronome by gradually increasing in speed each time. Compared to avoiding wrong notes or missing notes, it is more significant to hear the melody, bass and the phrasing in this part. Two methods can help with this issue: practicing a simplified version of only melody and bass, and developing a

systematic practice of the tempo rubato and dynamic can be surprisingly helpful in resolving the technical problems.

❖ Sectional analysis

Introduction (mm. 1-4)

Melody and bass

The main melody of this section is comprised of the sigh motif and the recitative-like notes, whereas the bass part almost always stays on E^b, the dominant of A^b major (Musical Example 4.25). The voicing of the successive fully diminished sevenths and the sixteenth notes is important; but the primary notes are more like extensions of the melody and also play a virtuoso role. Thus, it is helpful to consider layered dynamics in order to make a contrast between the two kinds of melodies.

Layered dynamics

Although both melodies have dynamic changes, the main melody dominates the primary dynamic levels. In other words, it is better not to exceed the dynamics of the main melody while playing the virtuosic melody. Among the five E^b basses, the fourth one has the loudest volume, which results in the most exciting moment in Introduction. Consequently, the principal route of the dynamics includes a big *crescendo* from the first measure to the beginning chord of the fourth measure and then a *decrescendo* in the remainder of the fourth measure. (The long *diminuendo* in measure 4 should have terraced dynamics within the phrase, so that small swells and dips create smaller shapes within the larger softening of dynamics.) From the view of local dynamic changes, there is a small *crescendo* “hidden” during the time of the eighth rest at the beginning of each

measure (Musical Example 4.25). Also, the sigh motif deserves small *decrescendo* according to the direction and mood of the melody. During the overarching *decrescendo*, one may add layered dynamics as shown in Musical Example 4.25. In addition, for the sake of emotional release, one may play the last melodic note E^b with *crescendo* and then *decrescendo* during the trill.

Phrasing

The Introduction contains only one phrase, which is presented as three 4/4 bars plus a long and unmeasured cadenza-like “bar”; each of these measures begins with a rest on the downbeat. Despite the downbeat rests, the accent still needs to be strong in mind. The first half of the phrase (until the first fermata) sounds *appassionato* while the second half is sentimental. One way to express the contrast between moods is to keep a steady pulse in the first half and add a free rubato in the second half.

Pedal

There are no pedal marks in the Busoni edition, but suggestions for pedaling are clearly presented in the Belwin Mills edition. Some of them are constructive, such as the pedals on the first, third, and fourth beats in the first two measures, because they enrich the power of the bass as well as making the harmonic progression clear.¹⁰⁸ In the virtuosic passages, it seems the shallow and frequent changes of the pedal will be helpful to the connection of the melody without muddling the harmonies. After the first fermata, it is better not to use pedal for the chromatic sixteenth notes. Then a half pedal for the next chord and change it during the F^b triplets while sustaining the half notes (D^b, B^b, and A^b). After the second fermata, frequent changes of quarter pedals will work well in most

¹⁰⁸ Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano*, 57.

acoustics. The third fermata can be pedaled after the appoggiatura notes. Whether to pedal the next two sixteenth notes (D and E^b) or not depends on how one divides the phrase. If the two notes are counted as the last notes of the phrase in Introduction, they could be pedaled within the trill. If the two notes are viewed as the appoggiatura of the D^b5 in the next phrase in the Exposition, they might be played without pedals.

Exposition: T₁ (mm. 4-30)

Phrasing

T₁, as displayed in the chart, is in aba¹ ternary form and has eight phrases in all. Part “a” or “a¹” has a symmetrical structure (4+4) whereas part “b” is asymmetrical (2+2+2+4). In parts “a” and “a¹,” the melody is intermittent, with two quarter rests within each phrase, requiring a quick breath twice per phrase. Between the two phrases, a longer breath can be applied in order to make the phrase structure clear without stopping the music. In part “b,” the four phrases are in the form of question-and-answer. It is as if someone falls into extreme contradiction. One may apply a relatively deeper breath between the phrases in part “b,” compared to the quick breathing within the phrases in part “a.” In the fourth phrase of part “b,” two other breaths may be taken after the fermata and during the sixteenth rest. Although the accents sometimes appear on the off beats of the melody, one can still emphasize the pulses on the downbeat of each measure or the first and third beats of each measure. The pulse on each downbeat makes the melody seem more song-like and tender; the faster pulses on both the first and third beats push the melody forward and sound more passionate.

Tempo rubato

One way to express two similar or identical phrases differently is to use tempo rubato. Both materials “a” and “b” have similar melodies. In “a,” only the last three melodic notes are changed in the two phrases. The resistance to different melodic notes, for example, the notes C (m. 7) in the first phrase and G (m. 12) in the second phrase, can make the two phrases different. In “b,” the catechetical phrases begin with the same melody, although in two different registers and various harmonies. In order to convey the question-and-answer sense of the music, the tempo can be back-and-forth between the two phrases, for example, an animated tempo for measures 12-14 and a hesitating tempo for measures 14-16. Since the last phrase in part “b” is extended, the tempo can be more propulsive until the fermata above the note D. One needs to take special care in sculpting the timing for the D because it is a surprise for the emotional change as well as a balance for the tempo rubato. Then a little bit of resistance to the B[#] in measure 22 will benefit the return to the normal tempo after the virtuosic show time. In “a¹,” it is clear to see Liszt’s intention of the tempo from the words *più agitato e più rinforzando* and *ritardando* under the fermata in the second phrase.

Layered dynamics

Another way to make two similar phrases different is to change the dynamics. In “a,” the volume of the first phrase should be decreased because the harmony goes back to the tonic chord of A^b major. A *crescendo* can be applied to the second phrase according to the open harmony in the end of the phrase. In “b,” apart from the gradual dynamic changes marked in the score of the Busoni edition, the sudden dynamic contrast of the

melodies between high and low registers will embody the question-and-answer phrases as well.

It is not difficult to shape a melody, but an advanced piano student also needs to learn how to set off the melody through the accompaniment. There are three points to be considered. First, the accompaniment part needs to be shaped as well as the melody. Second, the accompaniment cannot exceed the dynamic level of the bass and melody. Third, when the melody finishes, the role of the accompaniment becomes more important and functions as the connection between the melodies. This function especially works for part “a¹.”

Exposition: T₂ (mm. 30-41)

Technique issues

Between the two fermatas in this section, there is a virtuosic passage that deals with sixths and sevenths. The passage seems to be written for the left hand. The Belwin Mills edition even offers the fingering for the left hand.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, it will be much easier to play it with two hands, for the purpose of executing both *legato* articulation and shaping.

Phrasing

This section includes four phrases: three short phrases plus one long phrase (2+2+2+5). Compared to the first three phrases, which have smooth melodies and sustained bass G, the last phrase moves more excitedly in both melody and bass. Similar to T₁, T₂ begins from the off-beat (the fourth beat) which leads the music to the downbeat

¹⁰⁹ Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano*, 59.

of the next measure. Breathing before that off-beat will not only make division of the phrases clear, but it will also give energy to the next beat. On account of this, the pulse in this section is suggested to be on the downbeat of each two measures except the last measure in the irregular phrase (Musical Example 4.27).

Musical Example 4.27, “Il lamento”: Analysis of phrasing in T2 (mm. 30-40)

However, depending on different interpretations of the music, this section can also be viewed as two larger phrases (4+9), which may work better for the phrase continuation.

Tempo rubato

First of all, Liszt marked *un poco riten. il tempo* (holding back the tempo a bit) before the occurrence of the motif (m. 30). But since he does not specify how long this tempo setting should last, one can play the whole T₂ a little bit slower than T₁ or one can slow down the speed only until the new theme appears in measure 30. The second

concern of the tempo rubato is the resistance to the two climaxes in this section. One is for the highest note A5 in measure 40 and the other is for the destination note F[#]5 with the *sforzando* in measure 41. Both of them require a preceding sense of resistance.

Another tempo rubato which should be considered occurs after the first and second fermatas. As describes in the structural analysis for this piece, T₁ is imagined in the real world, while T₂ exists in the memory world. The virtuosic passage in measure 41 serves as a bridge between T₂ and T₁. There is no exact timing for the fermatas, but one might imagine that the first fermata feels as if one's memory is frozen, whereas during the second one, it seems as if the real world gradually comes into sight again. The length of the second fermata may be more than the first one because the note E under the second fermata is the last note of this section.

Layered dynamics

In the analysis of the tempo rubato, we have already examined the resistance before the notes A and F[#]. They are related with the issue of dynamics as well. An advanced piano student needs to ask himself or herself “which is the loudest note in this section?” Both answers work because the note A is the highest note and it has an accent; the note F[#] is the destination note and is emphasized by *sforzando*. The choice of either one also corresponds to which one deserves relatively longer preceding resistance.

Pedal

The *una corda* marks appear for the first time in T₂ of the Exposition, which makes the feeling more like a memory. But there is no need to play the soft pedal throughout the section. Since the first phrase is as the same as the third one, the soft pedal can be released for the third phrase in order to make a color difference between the two

phrases. Another reason to release the soft pedal there is that doing so will help the player create a big *crescendo* for the section. With respect to the damper pedal, it depends on the change of harmony and melody in the first three phrases. For the last phrase, it can be changed when the bass notes change.

Development: a² (mm. 41-53)

Melody and bass

The Development starts with the thematic transformation of material “a.” The melody becomes more hesitant due to a number of fermatas; it is also decorated by more notes and moves toward a new direction based on vii₉ chords (mm. 48-52). The bass proceeds in tonic-dominant-tonic-leading tone in B major, but it finally moves to a new key (Musical Example 4.28).

The musical score for "Il lamento" (measures 41-53) is presented in five systems. The notation includes a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various performance instructions: *riten. il Tempo*, *dolce armonioso*, *pp legatissimo*, *la melodia accentato assai*, *quasi improvisato*, *pp*, *crescendo affrettando*, *ritenuto a tempo*, and *agitato*. Red boxes highlight specific melodic phrases in the right hand, and blue boxes highlight specific bass lines in the left hand.

Musical Example 4.28, “Il lamento”: Melody and bass (mm. 41-53)

Phrasing

Although the fermata is often a sign to take time or to breathe, it is not a reminder to divide the phrases in this section. In the section above called “Elements of Performing Liszt’s Music,” we saw the importance of long phrases in playing Liszt’s piano works (p. 33). Here in the Development, the section can be divided into two big phrases of irregular

structure (4+8), grounded on the partition of material “a.” Originally, material “a” has a periodic structure (4+4), but material “a²” extends the length of the phrase owing to the vii₉ chords and atmospheric mood. Regarding the rhythm of the phrasing in this section, one pulse per bar is appropriate.

Tempo rubato

Fermatas have a huge impact on the rhythmic flow within this section. With so many fermatas, there is no need to wait too long on each one, as too much waiting time will weaken the flowing of the music. Varied timing for these fermatas is recommended. For instance, the fermata above C[#] (m. 47) can take longer than either of the previous two fermatas above F[#], for the sake of changing the mood from hesitation to tension in the second phrase. The last fermata above the note B (m. 52) may take the longest time in this section, on account of the heartbroken emotion in the final moment. One can also enjoy the rest time right after the peak in the section (m. 51-52). The timing of the rest contains different moods, such as disappointment, loss and sorrow (Musical Example 4.29).

Musical Example 4.29, “Il lamento”: Timing and dynamics (mm. 51-52)

The tempo rubato not only “steals” the time, but also gives back the time. In the first phrase, the “stolen time” during the triplets needs to be returned during the

sextuplets, which means slowing down the speed (*riten. il tempo*) for the triplets and speeding up for the sextuplets. In the second phrase, the *quasi improvisato* (as if improvising) can perhaps be understood as speeding up the two eighth notes before the fermata and slowing down the two eighth notes after the fermata. From the view of the whole section, the first six measures are in flexible tempo while the next six measures drive ahead, as Liszt marked *affrettando* (hurrying) in measure 48.

Layered dynamics

This is not only the slowest, but also the softest section in the whole piece since Liszt marked so many *pianissimos* and *dolce armonioso* (gentle, harmonious) in the first phrase. There are also many gradual changes of dynamics within one measure in this section, which is a challenge to a piano student. The more nuances a performer can express, the more colors the audiences will hear. In addition to these surface dynamics, dynamics on a deeper layer indicate the contrast between the first six measures and the second six measures, corresponding to the tempo rubato. No matter what dynamic changes appear in the first six measures, they stay within a soft volume range. By contrast, the second six measures have a big *crescendo* until *fortissimo* with *sforzando* (m. 51). Here the performer would do well to start from *pp*, to have room to increase the volume, then sustaining the peak volume until the first rolled chord finishes. After that, a *crescendo* and *decrescendo* can be applied within the *forte* level in measure 52 (Musical Example 4.29).

Pedal

The *una corda* is still available in this section until the last five measures. The damper pedal should be changed consistently with the harmonic or melodic changes to keep the sound clear. Interesting pedal options occur in measures 51 and 52. There are no damper pedal marks in this section in Busoni's 1910-11 edition. But the Belwin Mills edition suggests a long pedal over measure 51 and before the second *glissando*.¹¹⁰ This enhances the dramatic and dissonant vii₁₁ chord, which let the resonance pervade in the air. But it may lose the denotation of the rests between the two measures. By contrast, the Edition Peters score indicates a pedal release when the first rolled chord finishes.¹¹¹ It hints that the silence is also part of the music and gives the first *glissando* gorgeous completion.

Development: b¹ (mm. 53-65)

As the thematic transformation of material "b," this section alters itself by means of flowing accompaniment, extension of the melody, and modulation. The bass notes dominate the harmonic rhythm, the main route of the dynamics, and the tempo rubato among other voices. In general, it is not a hard part to play, even though there are two running virtuosic passages. There is no need to play the two passages in rapid tempo though they have a number of sixteenth and thirty-second notes. On the contrary, these short cadenzas are more like emotional expression. Both of them are in descending direction and decreasing tempo. The triplets and the sextuplet in the two passages show

¹¹⁰ Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo*, 60.

¹¹¹ Franz Liszt, *Etudes*, vol. 4 of *Franz Liszt: Klavierwerke*, ed. Emil don Sauer (Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1917), 166.

part of the chromatic scale. These features embody the meaning of the title “Il lamento.” Technically, practicing in the rhythmic patterns works here (e.g., three or four notes as one group) and it requires relaxed and flexible wrists as well as comfortable fingerings. The second passage can be played by both hands. For example, the left hand can take over the melody from the first D^{#2}. Musically, the first passage tends to be *decrecendo* with the accents on the chromatic notes in the triplets, whereas the second passage is marked *crescendo* with more emphasis on the sextuplet notes. The tempo is apt to retard in both triplets and sextuplets; the pedal can be taken shallowly during the running sixteenth and thirty-second notes and should be clearly changed for all chromatic notes in the two passages. The sextuplet is in fact the impetus to the first note C^{#2} in the next measure (m. 66). The relatively longer resistance to the D2 (m. 65) and a deep breath before the C^{#2} will give more energy to the C^{#2}.

Development: climax (mm. 66-91)

The climax section can be divided into three parts: one part in the lower registers that is ready to make a fight (mm. 66-73), one part across three registers that excitedly paves the way for the climax (mm. 75-81), and another part in the higher registers that bursts out all the emotions (mm. 82-91). These phrase demarcations correspond to Liszt’s markings *più agitato*, *energico appassionato assai*, and *ardito* in measures 66, 75, and 82, respectively. It is hard to decide which part measure 74 should be sorted with. It is more like a transitional measure between the first two parts. On one hand, measure 75 is the melodic sequence of measure 74. On the other hand, measure 74 occurs in the form of

polyphonic writing in four voices, which continues the texture of the first part. Both ways of classification have advantages and disadvantages.

Melody and bass

The music in the lower registers is polyphonic, including four voices: two melodies, one bass, and one accompaniment part. In the first four measures (mm. 66-69), the upper melody contains new material while the lower melody is a combination of material “b” and the sigh motif (Musical Example 4.30). But the two melodies exchange positions in measures 71 and 73. The bass, in accordance with the melody, is climbing up by half steps.

Musical Example 4.30, “Il lamento”: The first part in the climax section (mm. 66-73)

The second part has three voices: melody, fill-in, and bass. The melody is a variation and extension of material “b.” The middle voice carries on the triplet accompaniment from the first part. The bass is written in octaves and it makes an imposing statement. In the last two measures (mm. 80-81), it stays on the dominant note E^b of the A^b major key.

The beginning of the last part is like a powerful march. At first, both hands play the same melody, along with the dominant octave E^b (mm. 82-85). The left hand gradually becomes the accompaniment part from measure 86. In the last four measures, the chords for each hand are played alternately and the melody is made up of the top notes of the right-hand chords. The basses from measure 86 to measure 91 display a descending whole-tone scale (E^b-D^b-B-A-G-F-E^b). They are the leaders in the music here, so it is necessary to play them louder than the melodic notes.

Phrasing

Nine phrases are unevenly divided within the three parts of this section and the pulse stays at one per bar. The first part has a regular phrase structure (2+2+2+2) if measure 74 is excluded. But instead of breathing between the measures, it is better to take a breath before the last eighth note on the left hand in each two measures (Musical Example 4.30). The reason is that the eighth note gives energy to the next downbeat. The first three phrases progress in ascending chromatic direction while the last phrase is the same as the third phrase.

The second part has two longer phrases and it may be better to count measure 74 as the first bar of the first phrase so that the phrase structure becomes periodic (4+4). The

relationship between the two phrases can be understood as question-and-answer, or that the second phrase is an extension of the first one.

The third part has three phrases (2+2+6). The first two short phrases are completely identical, but they can be played with different articulation (for example *tenuto* in the first phrase and *legato* in the second one). The third phrase extends the melody from the previous two phrases in the middle of the phrase. It seems that Liszt intentionally magnified the lamenting emotion on the dominant so as to delay the time back to the tonic in A^b major. Regarding breathing, each sixteenth rest is a good place to breathe, but the timing of these breaths should vary. Within the first phrase, taking a quick breath during the first two sixteenth rests is beneficial to show the rhythm; a relatively longer breath for the third one is for the purpose of showing the division of the phrases. The same principle can be applied to the next two phrases.

Tempo rubato

Tempo rubato mainly happens in the second and third parts. Before the second phrase (mm. 78-82) of the second part begins, a little bit of resistance to the bass C octave will make the *rinforzando* more obvious. In the same way, a slight retard at the third beat and a big breath before the sixteenth note in measure 81 are helpful in pushing the music to the climax (Musical Example 4.26). The third part seems to recall the poor people who suffered from the disasters of nature, conflict, and finance during the second half of the 1840s. The arrival at the F7 octave in the right hand (m. 82) is not the end of the climax, but the beginning of it. After these chromatic chords are repeated several times, another peak—the G[#]7 (m. 87) is finally reached through *rinforzando e ritenuto*. The resistance to the G[#]7 makes the chord prior to it (B5-D[#]6-B6) the longest eighth-

value chord in the measure. The G^{#7} is also the highest note in the whole piece. After this arrival, Liszt does not close the section, but continues the music in gradual slowing tempo (*slentando* then *quasi adagio*), which gives the impression of a revolutionary fighting with the last ounce of his strength. The fermata in measure 90 seems to portray the moment of the protagonist falls down in a pool of blood.

Layered dynamics

The main dynamic structure of the section is a big *crescendo*. Within it, the local dynamic changes can be back-and-forth, which gives performers more room to grow. For instance, in the first part, if the second phrase starts at a softer dynamic level than the first phrase, it will give more space for the third and fourth phrases to increase in volume. After such an extended *crescendo* throughout nearly the whole section, a dramatic *decrescendo* occurs in measures 90-91. There are two ways to execute this: (1) continuation of the *crescendo* from the previous measure until the fermata and then a *decrescendo* within the last three chords; or (2) the continuation of the *crescendo* from the previous measure until the *rinforzando* and then *decrescendo* from measure 90 to the A^b major *glissando* chord in measure 91 (Musical Example 4.31).

Musical Example 4.31, “Il lamento”: Two possible dynamic plans (mm. 89-91)

The previous discussion is about the horizontal layered dynamics. The vertical layered dynamics among different voices can be understood by connecting them to various instruments. For example, in the first polyphonic part, the melody in the right hand can be imagined to be played by cello and the left-hand melody by a trombone. Both of them are doing a *crescendo* but at different times. The sigh motif with *decrescendo* might be performed by a horn.

Pedal

One damper pedal per beat is appropriate in the first part, but changing pedal according to the procession of the bass notes is more suitable in the second part. For the third part, three aspects need to be noticed: the sustainability of the bass notes, the characteristic of the dotted rhythm, and the clearness of the chords. A suggested way of pedaling appears in Musical Example 4.32.

Musical Example 4.32, “Il lamento”: Damper pedals in climax (mm. 82-90)

One surprising *una corda* marking occurs at measure 88. Liszt might want to change the sound color from the previous measure, which is reinforced by the tempo change.

Recapitulation: T_1' / a^3 (mm. 91-99)

The Reprise starts with the thematic transformation of material “a¹” in the home key, A^b major, without return to materials “a” and “b.” Compared to “a¹,” “a³” becomes more lyrical, light, and graceful by means of a flowing accompaniment part and a softer dynamic level in the Recapitulation. Instead of eighth notes as the accompaniment in the Exposition and Development sections, Liszt changes to sixteenth notes in the Recapitulation, which also increases the technical difficulty. With reference to the

dynamics and the expression terms, “a³” begins with *piano, leggiaramente*, and *con grazia*, replacing the *forte ed appassionato* and *più agitato e più rinforzando* in “a¹.” Because of these changes, the music sounds soothing in the Reprise, compared to the feeling of hesitation and loss in the Exposition.

Recapitulation: T₂' (mm. 99-132)

Melody and bass

T₂' is composed of materials “c¹” and “c²,” both of which are the thematic transformation of material “c.” Then “c¹” follows the melodic routine of “c,” but in a different key (F[#] major), accompanied by running sixteenth notes. By contrast, “c²” extends the melody of “c” in a new key (B^b major), also with sixteenth-note accompaniment. The aim of this extension is to find a way back to the home key.

There are six weighty bass notes in this section: F[#] (m. 99), B^b (m. 112), B (m. 125), D[#]=E^b (m. 129), E^b (m. 131), and A^b (m. 132). They are important signs for tonal change or emphasis on the peaks (m. 125 and 129). Hence, a feeling of resistance before and/or after these notes is essential. For example, the bass B^b (m. 112) is both the ending note of “c¹” and the beginning note of “c².” The accent on this bass is not enough to hear the key change. The prior resistance (the fermata on the double line in m. 111) as well as the subsequent resistance to this bass will make the note sound more prominent to the audience.

Layered dynamics

The dynamic plan of “c¹” is based on that of “c” and the range of the dynamic level is from *pp* to *f*. By contrast, the dynamic range in “c²” is from *mp-ff*. Liszt also used terms like *con passione*, *appassionato*, *rinforzando*, *sf*, and *rinforzando appassionato* to indicate the intense emotion of the apotheosis section “c².” The Belwin Mills edition, it even adds *ff* for measure 125, making it one of the two loudest dynamic markings in this piece; the first one appears in measure 82 in the Development.¹¹² The dynamic level and other expression markings are not the only evidence that this is the apotheosis. From the view of tempo, Liszt marked *un poco più mosso* above the B^b major arpeggio, which makes it the fastest section in this piece. Technically, it is also the hardest among the sections due to the sixteenth-note broken chords and the big jumps between the melody and fill-in.

With regard to the dynamic layers, on a deep level “c²” presents an extended *crescendo* with two peaks, in measures 125 and 129, respectively. On a surfaced level, three details are important. First of all, almost all the phrases contain a small *crescendo* and *decrescendo*. Secondly, there are three phrases that are similar to each other within measures 119-125. One can decrease the volume in the second phrase in order to give more space for the third phrase, which includes a peak; one could also keep the ascending dynamic direction until measure 125 and then calm down to a relatively soft dynamic level, so that it will be easier to arrive at another peak in measure 129. Be sure that the two peaks are coordinated with the tempo rubato. Thirdly, after the second peak – the broken chord in measure 129, it is still not the time to lighten the exciting moment. Liszt

¹¹² Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo*, 66.

highlighted the descending chromatic scale through *rinforzando appassionato* in gradually slowing tempo.

Coda: a⁴ (mm. 144-154)

The coda consists of three materials: c³, Introduction, and a⁴. As far as the emotion is concerned, whatever was hesitating, painful, tragic, or hopeless in the previous sections, is now gone with wind. What remains in the Coda is *dolce, semplice* (simple), *con abbandono* (with abandon), and *calmato*. It is as if the best consolation to the people who lost their lovers or their fortunes is to keep living well, to relieve repressed emotions, and to recall the happy memories. Material “c³” (T₂) brings the audience to the sweet memory again as it happens in material “c.” Although Introduction material reappears after “c³,” it is no longer *appassionato* as before. Liszt did not put *forte* in the recurrence of the Introduction, so the range from *mf* to *f* will be suggested for “c³.” In the Introduction, there is no need to play the second virtuosic passage fast, because Liszt indicates *non troppo presto*, *rallentando*, and *ritenuto*.

Melody and bass

There are two phrases in material “a⁴” (4+6), with melodic notes alternately appearing in the soprano and alto voices. This section is different from material “a” in that material “a⁴” slightly changes the intervals and varies the rhythm from quarter notes to dotted rhythm for the melody in the first phrase. However, the bass in the first phrase usually keeps the main notes from material “a.” In the second phrase, the melody begins with G (the first phrase starts with F) and goes to a new downward direction. It is not easy to play the melodic notes in the second phrase since they occur in the middle of the

chords. Rolling the chords toward the melodic notes will help with voicing, as the Belwin Mills edition suggests.¹¹³ For example, the chord A^b3-E^b4-G4-A^b4 (m. 148) can be rolled in the order A^b3-E^b4-A^b4-G4 so as to emphasize the melodic note G4. Also, the tenor voice needs to be heard, because it plays the important repeated notes A^b to stress the return to the home key. The tenor part provides a pacifying role emotionally, so it is not necessary to play it with sharp accentuation. Small *crescendos* or *decrescendos* between the two notes A^b may be desired. In measure 150-152, the bass seems more important than the alto melody due to the accents and dotted rhythm. Musical Example 4.33 indicates the melodies and basses that appear in different voices.

Musical Example 4.33, “Il lamento”: Melody and bass notes in material a⁴ (mm. 144-154)

Tempo rubato

Before “a⁴” starts, there is a fermata above the dominant seventh chord and a descending scale in measure 144. Two ways of playing this are worth considering. One can enjoy the time during the fermata and go back to the original tempo from the second tied G. A quick breath is needed before “a⁴” starts. Another way is to take relatively less

¹¹³ Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo*, 68.

time during the fermata and then apply *ritenuto* for the descending scale. A longer breath is required before the note F4 so that “a⁴” can start with a new tempo.

Material “a⁴” differs from “a” in that there are fewer notes and more rests, but these are not reasons to drag the tempo of “a⁴.” One needs to keep the tempo during the rests and the notes with longer value (e.g., quarter note, half note, and whole note). Enjoy “playing” these rests rather than stopping the music during the silence. The rests are an essential part of the music and we need to keep listening during the rests. Ignoring the meters or colors of the rests will result in discontinuity of the phrasing. The only *ritenuto* appears in the ascending arpeggio in the last measure. Then we can relish the resonance and pause with hands in the air during the last half rest with the fermata.

La leggerezza

❖ Description of title

A few scholars, including Kenneth Hamilton and Derek Watson, state that the second etude in F minor of Liszt's *Trois Études de concert* is in the shadow of Chopin's study Op. 25 No. 2, which is also in F minor. Both etudes display "sinuous passage-work" and the technique of continuous triplets.¹¹⁴ With respect to the difficulty of the pianistic skills, Liszt's "La leggerezza" includes more varied challenges, such as running sixteenth notes, irregular rhythmic subdivision, chromatic thirds and sixths, and cadenzas. Also, Liszt's concert etude is longer (98 bars) than Chopin's (69 bars). Furthermore, the musical content from "La leggerezza" is more diverse than that of Chopin's Op. 25 No. 2. Despite the free and floating feeling both etudes convey, Chopin's is more like a study of triplets with different note values (eighth-note triplet against quarter-note triple) between the two hands. By contrast, the multiple changes of tempo, dynamics, expression, texture, technique, and tonality that Liszt packs into this piece, nicely reflect the meaning of the title – lightness and swiftness – and also endow "La leggerezza" with a storyline. Various sections of this piece may easily remind audiences of the ups and downs of a kite, the dance of a feather in the air, an eagle soaring above the valley, or a roller coaster on a starry night.

¹¹⁴ Kenneth Hamilton, "Liszt's Early and Weimar Piano Works," in *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, ed. Kenneth Hamilton (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 75.
Derek Watson, *Liszt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 227.

❖ Structure

“La leggerezza” is not based on a stereotyped form, but rather is founded upon the six-note motif in the first measure (Musical Example 4.34). As shown in Table 4.4, this etude has two themes and can be divided into eight sections – IntroductionABA¹B¹CA²Coda. Like the method he uses in “Il lamento,” here Liszt creates a basic motif B-C-D^b-E-F-A^b in the Introduction and reuses it in the Climax and Coda (Musical Example 4.34.1). Then from the basic motif, he selects three notes C-E-F for the first theme in F minor and C-D^b-F for the second theme in A^b major, respectively (Musical Example 4.34.2 and 4.34.3). He also subtly applies chromaticism (derived from the basic motif B-C-D^b as well) to the whole piece. For example, he modulates the three chromatic notes in sections B and B¹ (Musical Example 4.34.4); he uses a descending chromatic scale for the bass line in sections A¹ and A² (Musical Example 4.35.1); and he applied chromaticism to the varied melody and cadenza (Musical Example 4.35.2 & 4.35.3). Liszt changes the texture for the two themes in sections A¹ and B¹, which feature what Beatrice Morin calls “transcendental techniques.”¹¹⁵ Here we see the appearance of the chromaticism as well (Musical Example 4.35).

Section B¹ is the longest section in the etude and it contains three motives. It starts with T₂ in A^b major and moves on with a chain of modulations. Liszt cleverly combined the two motives C-D^b-F and B-C-D^b during the modulations (Musical Example 4.36). Then, in order to connect the climax which is established on the six-note motif and starts with the ascending chromatic motif B-C-D^b, he abandons the motif C-D^b-F and continues

¹¹⁵ Rachel Beatrice Morin, “Progressive and Traditional Elements in the *Trois Études De Concert* by Franz Liszt” (DMA diss., University of Iowa, 2008), 142-4.

the other motif with modulations (mm. 66-69). A cadenza in *presto* tempo follows the climax and closes section B¹.

After this, a mysterious section C appears along with the transcendental techniques that are used in section A¹ before. There are two reasons to call it section C instead of A²: First, the running notes do not form a theme, but merely go up and down in a sequence. Second, the tonality neither goes back to F minor nor stays in a stable key area, but undergoes modulation in a descending-third relationship. Additionally, it seems that new material occurs in the second half of the section (from m. 80). Morin analyzes this section as the second statement of the first theme in A minor, but she also points out the “constant modulation” and “greatly altered” first theme in the second half of the section.¹¹⁶ The actual A² appears in the next section. Although it also contains something new after the first four measures, it shows a clear variation of the first theme, the same downward chromatic bass notes, and the same key (F minor) as the opening. The last section, Coda, reuses the six-note motif from the beginning measure, which closes the piece with the same material but with a different mood. It is also surprising to hear the F major chord at the end, which gives a vaguely religious feeling for the etude.

The whole piece employs a soft dynamic range most of the time, which again reflects the meaning of the title (“lightness”). The two themes embody the fluctuation of the dynamics: T₂ is always relatively louder and more expressive than T₁. The most dramatic dynamic change (*mp-fff*) happens in section B¹, along with modulations and more flowing and complicated textures. After this, although the texture becomes homophonic and thinner in the cadenza, the volume still increases with *accelerando* until

¹¹⁶ Rachel Beatrice Morin, 98.

the *diminuendo* in the penultimate measure of the section (m. 74). Then section C returns with soft dynamics. The opening and ending may not be the softest places in this etude, but it is better to play them in a relatively softer dynamic.

Musical Example 4.34, "La leggerezza" : Basic motif (m. 1)

Musical Example 4.34.2, "La leggerezza" : T1, based on the motif "C-E-F" (mm. 11-13)

Musical Example 4.34.1 (1), "La leggerezza" :
The motif "B-C-Db-E-F-Ab" in Climax (mm. 68-71)

Musical Example 4.34.1 (2), "La leggerezza" :
The motif "B-C-Db-E-F-Ab" in Coda (mm. 94-98)

Musical Example 4.34, "La leggerezza" : Basic motif (m. 1)

Musical Example 4.34.3, "La leggerezza" : T2, based on the motif "C-Db-F" (mm. 27-29)

Musical Example 4.34.4 (1), "La leggerezza" :
Modulation, based on the motif "B-C-Db" in Section B (mm. 31-33)

Musical Example 4.34.4 (2), "La leggerezza" :
Modulation, based on the motif "B-C-Db" in Section B1 (mm. 57-59)

Musical Example 4.34.4 (3), "La leggerezza" :
Modulation, based on the motif "B-C-Db" in Section B1 (mm. 66-67)

Section	Intro.	A	B	A ¹	B ¹ (climax included)	C	A ²	Coda
Theme		T ₁	T ₂	T ₁	T ₂		T ₁	
Motif	B-C-D ^b -E-F-A ^b	C-E-F	C-D ^b -F	Modified C-E-F	Modified C-D ^b -F; the climax is based on the six-note motif	First half: Modified C-E-F; second half: new material	Modified C-E-F	B-C-D ^b -E-F-A ^b
Key	uncertain	fm	A ^b M	fm	A ^b M-modulation	Modulation	fm	fm-FM
Measure	1-10	11-27	27-41	41-53	53-75	75-86	86-94	94-98
Dynamic range	(<i>pp</i>)- <i>p</i>	<i>pp-mp</i>	<i>mp-f</i>	<i>pp-mp</i>	<i>mp-fff</i>	<i>pp-mf</i>	<i>pp-f</i>	<i>p-(pp)</i>

Table 4.4, “La leggerezza”: Structure

Musical Example 4.35.1, “La leggerezza”:
Descending chromatic scale for the bass line (mm. 11-13)

Musical Example 4.35.2, “La leggerezza”: Chromaticism in cadenza (m. 40)

Musical Example 4.35.3, “La leggerezza”:
Chromaticism in melody (m. 41)

Musical Example 4.36, “La leggerezza”:

Combined motives C-D^b-F and B-C-D^b in section B¹ (mm. 60-62)

❖ Technical issues

Rapid scale passages combined with irregular rhythmic subdivision prove to be the main technical issue, in addition to the characteristic lightness and swiftness one expects to find in a piece entitled “La leggerezza.” Mastering all of those difficulties combined at the same time can indeed be “transcendentally” difficult. Generally, in this etude, the left hand maintains eighth-note triplets while the right hand has fluid numbers of sixteenth-notes in each beat, such as one triplet against one sextuplet or septuplet. Because of the asymmetrical numbers of notes, the most likely technical problem is the unequal or unnatural coordination between the two hands.

To solve this problem, it is first necessary to consider how to divide the passages into units for both hands that show clearly how the hands fit together. For example, one beat that contains a triplet against a septuplet can be divided into 21 units (Figure 4.1). The hand with the triplet plays one note every seven units while the other hand with the septuplet plays one note every three units. Although this kind of practice only works at a slow tempo, a performer should at least feel the different rhythms in the same time length with metronome.

Figure 4.1, “La leggierezza”: Equal division of the triplet against the septuplet in one beat

After this more cognitive step in the practice routine, it is essential to practice each hand separately and then hands together in a gradually faster tempo without thinking about the mathematical division (appropriate performance tempo for the etude is $\text{♩} = 80-88$). In a manner similar to playing Chopin’s nocturne, the sense of nature and romance is important during the performance. One needs to know when to sprint and when to lay back, in other words, how best to execute the tempo rubato. Moreover, the left hand is the boss who controls the timing, because the right hand has to cope with different groups of notes in one phrase (e.g., quintuplet, septuplet, and sextuplet in mm. 41-43).

Another technical issue is the double notes in one hand that appear as chromatic minor thirds in the Ossia of section B¹ (mm. 60-65). This Ossia version is more difficult than the original techniques that are marked with bigger notes. Like playing Chopin’s Etude in G[#] minor, Op. 25 no. 6, carefully planned fingering and connected top notes are

the most important elements for this technique. The Busoni edition has already provided appropriate fingerings on the score. Practically speaking, one can play separated voices with the corresponding fingering: the higher voice of the third with the fingering three, four, and five; the lower voice with the fingering one and two. To release the tension of the fingers that do not have to work when the other voice is practiced individually, the performer can use these fingers to hold a Ping-Pong ball. In other words, hold a Ping-Pong ball with the thumb and the second finger when playing the higher voice, and vice versa. To release the tension of the arm, it is useful to roll the wrist. In the interest of musicality, a gradual dynamic change (according to the melodic direction) not only makes better phrasing and contrasting sound color, but also helps with the relaxation of the hand.

Double thirds occurs a second time in a descending chromatic scale in section C (m. 85). This measure is much easier to play because of its short length and the *poco ritardando*. The fingering in Busoni's edition is acceptable, but another fingering is offered for consideration in Musical Example 4.37. In terms of musicality, either *crescendo* or *decrescendo* works here. One can also make a contrasting dynamic change between the two parallel measures (e.g., Musical Example 4.37).

Musical Example 4.37, “La leggerezza”: Fingering and dynamics (mm. 84-85)

❖ Sectional analysis

Introduction (mm. 1-10)

The introduction has only one phrase, but it clearly displays the basic motif in the first measure and gives some hints about the stylistic characteristics of the piece, such as the chromaticism, circuitous melodic shape, wavy dynamics, and changeable tempo. The tonality is not obvious until the appearance of the dominant of F minor in measure 3. The dominant note C repeats itself again and again and finally switches to B^b in the last measure.

Layered dynamics

From the score, we can see many small *crescendos* and a big *decrescendo* according to the direction of the melody. But an advanced piano student can make more personal dynamic nuances so as to give the music soul and breath. For example, imagining a *crescendo* before the first beat of the first measure will help performers prepare the music and hear the music before playing it (Musical Example 4.38). According to the direction of the melody, Liszt sometimes also marks accents on the third beat sometimes. In addition to these local accents, it is important to recognize the pulses on the downbeat every two measures, even when there is no rearticulated pitch on the downbeat (Musical Example 4.38).

Musical Example 4.38, “La leggerezza”: Pulse and dynamics in Introduction (mm. 1-3)

The question of where to place the loudest and the softest places in any section is another dynamics issue. In the introduction, the repetition of the D^b6 in measure 7 is probably the loudest note. There are at least two reasons to support this: (1) the D^b6 is the highest note in the introduction; (2) this note is repeated once, which often means it is to be emphasized. With regards to the softest place, this often occurs at the beginning and/or ending of a section. Liszt's marking *smorzando* (dying away) already suggests a soft ending. But for the opening, it is delicious to savor measures 1 and 3. The soft start in measure 1 will build a mysterious feeling, but it may be difficult to increase the volume later in the long phrase. On the contrary, the *piano* in measure 1 and then *pianissimo* in measure 3 will give more room to increase the volume, but it may lose the mysterious quality. In one of his performances of this piece, the Russian pianist Evgeny Kissin chooses the second dynamic route. It seems to evoke the image of a baby bird transitioning from clumsy flopping to skillful soaring.

Tempo rubato

The most prominent tempo changes in the introduction are *accelerando* and *ritardando*. The *accelerando* should control the timing little by little instead of suddenly speeding up halfway through the section. In the case of the *ritardando*, since the *diminuendo* starts from measure 8, some performers may slow down the tempo along with the *diminuendo*. But in fact, the *ritardando* starts from the third beat of measure 9. The downward chromatic melody along with the *diminuendo*, *ritardando*, and *smorzando*, sounds as if a kite gradually falls down from the sky. Referring to the opening and the ending, the first two measures reflect the feeling of freedom but not slowing down—according to Liszt's indication, *A Capriccio* for this section. The fermata above the

melodic note B not only demonstrates the ending of this section, but also foretells the start of the next section. Take a big breath after the fermata and play the note C as if it is a grace note into the next measure. Additionally, applying some prior resistance before the highest and loudest note D^b (m. 7) is helpful in achieving the peak in this section.

Pedal

There are a few pedal markings for this piece in Busoni's edition in 1910-11, but the Belwin Mills edition offers more detailed pedal suggestions. In the introduction, it is necessary to use the *una corda* for some places like the ending and measure 1 or 3 in order to convey lightness. Regarding the damper pedal, it can be applied in measures 3-7 to emphasize the dominant note C. Then, in measures 8-9, the shallow and frequent changing of the damper pedal can make the descending chromatic scale clear (Musical Example 6). For the last measure, there is no pedal for the first beat on account of the rest sign for the left hand. Play the pedal from the second beat and change it on the third beat without blurring the grace notes. Right after playing the fermata B on the right hand, release the pedal and the left hand at the same time to avoid the dissonance of B against B^b. Then apply another pedal quickly after playing the last C and keep the pedal until the second beat of measure 11 (Musical Example 4.39).

Musical Example 4.39, “La leggerezza”: Pedal suggestions in Introduction (mm. 8-10)

Section A: T₁ (mm. 11-27)

Melody and bass

The graceful melody in the soprano is distinctly heard in section A. One performance-related observation is to bring out the last melodic note A^b on the downbeat of measure 27 because it is the tonic of the new key—A^b major. As for the bass, in addition to emphasizing the chromatic descending bass line (the first note of each triplet), it is important to bring out the D^b in measures 15-17 and 25-26. The specific chord progression: iv₆₅ - Gr⁺⁶ in F minor needs to be clearly heard in this section. For a similar purpose, the bass notes E^b and A^b in measures 26-27 present the functional harmonic progression V-I in A^b major, which also deserves underlining.

Phrasing

There are two long, similar phrases (mm. 11-20 and 21-27) that contain T₁ in different registers. Although the phrase structure is irregular (10+7) and two of the measures are in 4/4 time (m. 16 and m. 26), the pulse still occurs every two measures to keep the music flowing as if somebody is continuously dancing. Three breaths can be taken in measures 16, 17 and 20. The first two quick breaths correspond to the articulation *staccatissimo* and *staccato* (Musical Example 4.40). As a result, it is better to have contrasting repetition through articulation and dynamic changes. For example, one can play one statement *legato* and with a relatively softer volume. The third relatively longer breath after the dotted note B (m. 20) corresponds to the *rallentando* function as preparation for the coming second phrase (Musical Example 4.40). However, the breath is only taken mentally. In other words the right hand cannot leave the keyboard because of the slur.

Musical Example 4.40, “La leggerezza”:

Important bass note D^b, pulse, breath, dynamics, and pedals in section A (mm. 15-23)

Tempo rubato

In order to make the two similar phrases contrasting, one can play the first phrase with relatively stable tempo and dynamics while performing the second one more dramatically. For example, in spite of the *rallentando* at the end of the first phrase, there is no need to play the measure too slowly because it is not the end of the section. By contrast, one can apply resistance before and/or after the dotted note C at the end of the second phrase (m. 26), although there is no fermata above the note. The aim is to announce the modulation in the melody.

Pedal

A shallow pedal for each beat is feasible in this section, excepting the relatively longer pedal for the bass note D^b and the vibrato pedal for the monophonic voice in measures 18-19 (Musical Example 4.40). The *una corda* can be applied during the *pianissimo* measures (e.g., mm. 25-26).

Section B: T₂ (mm. 27-41)

Melody and bass

Similar to T₁, T₂ also presents itself twice in different registers, but it modulates from A^b major (m. 27) to E major (m. 34) through the passage based on the chromatic motif B-C-D^b. For the passage in measures 31-33, the first two chromatic notes of each measure can be played by the right hand, though they are written in the bass clef. After T₂ appears in E major, it modulates again (mm. 38-39) and finally prepares for F minor in the next section by means of a cadenza (m. 40) which is built upon a descending chromatic scale (Musical Example 4.41). The bass alternates between the notes A^b and E^b for T₂ in A^b major (mm. 27-30) and then remains on the pitch B for the same theme in E major (mm. 34-37). During the modulations, the bass goes downward against the direction of the melody for the first time (mm. 31-33), but it covers a completed ascending octatonic scale the second time (mm. 38-39) (Musical Example 4.41).

T2 continued

Modulation

piu agitato

Cadenza

poco rinforz.

Vortex-like descending chromatic scale

W

Section A¹

delicatamente

p dolcissimo

dimin. molto

fm

Musical Example 4.41, “La leggierezza”: The second modulation in section B (mm. 37-41)

Phrasing

According to the tonal change (A^b-modulation-E-modulation), this section can be divided into four phrases: 4+3+4+3. Regarding the pulses, since the phrase structure is irregular and the time signature switches to 4/4 time, one or two pulses per measure will be a more accessible approach for this section.

Technical issues

There are two technical issues in this section. First of all, the melody of T₂ is associated with the technique of voicing—the top notes of the connected sixths. Make sure to highlight the soprano voice and to reduce the weight of the palm on the left side of the right hand. Also, it is important to choose appropriate fingering for the connected

sixths. The second technical issue is in the cadenza. Pianists who have received robust training in finger strength can play the running chromatic scale precisely and at a rapid tempo; however, it may lack momentum with respect to musicality. The rotation of the shoulder and the wrist will not only make the finger work easier, but it will also create a vortex-like feeling for the descending chromatic scale. Moreover, light accents with a rising wrist on the first note of each six-note group will enhance the vortex-like feeling.

Layered dynamics

Compared with T₁, T₂ has a louder volume and more elastic dynamic changes. For example, most dynamic signs Liszt writes for section A are in the *piano* range whereas for section B they are in a *forte* range (the same thing happens in sections A¹ and B¹). For section B, he also prefers quick, wavy dynamic changes, which he does not mark in section A (Musical Example 4.42).

Musical Example 4.42, “La leggerezza”:

Quick and wavy dynamic changes in section B (mm. 28-30)

Within section B, Liszt indicates *espressivo* for the first half (from m. 27) while marking *appassionato* for the second half (from m. 34). The purpose is not only for making contrast between the two halves, but also for achieving the effect of gradually increasing excitement for the whole section as if the kite slowly rises higher and further in adversity. The adversity can be identified from the unstable dynamics (mentioned above) and the

modulations. During the first modulation, although each of the three bars includes a *crescendo* in the score, it implies a big *crescendo* stretched over all three bars. The goal of the layered dynamics is to arrive at the first peak in the section, the E major chord in measure 34. During the second modulation, the wavy dynamic changes along with *più agitato* seem to draw a picture of a fluttering kite in the wind. Although both melody and bass go upward, they finally change to a contrary direction when arriving at the second peak, a fully diminished seventh chord in measure 40. It sounds as if the kite falls down once it achieves a certain height. To create the situation of sudden shift as well as to have room for a long *crescendo*, it is better to start the *poco rinforzando* from a new soft dynamic (e.g., *subito piano* for the first sixteenth note after the fully diminished seventh chord) rather than from the dynamic level of the second peak. The *diminuendo* begins with the first D5 of these repetitions in the second half of measure 40, which makes it sound as if the kite is spinning while falling down. The first D of the repetitions can be accented in order to make the music more expressive.

Tempo rubato

Apart from the prior resistance before the peaks, the resistance between the three chromatic notes (C[#]-D-D[#]) in measure 33 can be viewed as another tempo rubato for the expression of romanticism. For the chords at the two peaks, the first one has only one broken interval in the right hand (if it is hard to span a tenth) so that both melodic and bass notes can easily be heard at the same time; but the second one includes broken chords in both hands, which requires resistance before the bass note B instead of the soprano F in order to hear them both. One may play a slow broken interval from the low B to the high F. It is also necessary to keep the important sound of the low B in the pedal.

To cooperate with the dynamic changes in the cadenza, one can speed up when playing the *crescendo* and then slow down when playing the *diminuendo* during the running-sixteenth chromatic scale. Last but not least, it is significant to take shallow breaths between measures 40 and 41, so as to re-establish the rhythm of the pulse for section A¹.

Pedal

During the passages in A^b major and E major, the pedal can be applied on the first, third, and fourth beats in each measure, which results in hearing the sustained bass notes as well as the quarter rests. During the passages in modulations, one pedal on each beat is necessary for the purpose of clarity. During the cadenza, according to the suggestion from the Belwin Mills edition, it is better to keep the damper pedal from the low B to the end of the passage one octave higher.¹¹⁷ Then apply a vibrato shallow pedal for the rest of the cadenza and add *una corda* at the end of the repetition of the five-note motif.

Section A¹: T₁ (mm. 41-53)

Phrasing

Section A¹ contains the same plan of melody, bass, and the same number of phrases as does section A does. However, the sections are different in that the two similar phrases in A¹ have a more fluid meter change, resulting in eight and five measures respectively in the section (e.g., m. 44 in 7/4 and m. 52 in 9/4). The same rhythmic irregularity results in one pulse every two beats rather than one pulse every two measures in section A. In measures 44 and 52, the pulse can be divided in the same way as in Musical Example 4.43. Furthermore, T₁ starts on the weak beat in section A¹ instead of

¹¹⁷ Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo* (Melville, NY: Belwin Mills, 1970), 71.

on the strong beat in section A except the one that begins with the third beat in 4/4 time in measure 51.

Musical Example 4.43, “La leggerezza”:

Pulse in the measures with irregular meters (m. 44 and m. 52)

Layered dynamics

As the markings at the beginning of the section (*delicatamente* and *dolcissimo*) indicate, this whole section seems to project the image of a feather floating in the air. Referring to the dynamic contrast between the phrases, the second phrase (*pp*) starts softer than the first one (*p*) because of Liszt’s markings in the score. But both phrases show the tendency of *crescendo*: the peak note of the first phrase is the highest D^b in measure 47, while the peak of the second one is the highest A^b in measure 52. When comparing the two similar measures 44 and 52, it seems that measure 52 in the second phrase can be played more exaggeratedly and emotionally than measure 44 in the first phrase. The reason is that measure 52 is the most dramatic moment in the second phrase,

but the first phrase includes a cadenza-like passage (mm. 47-48) after measure 44, which deserves more passion there.

The discussion above is about the deepest layer of the dynamics. When we focus on the superficial layer, we find that the sensitive and delicate dynamic changes are led by the direction of the melody. The ascending melody directs small *crescendos* while the descending melody guides small *decrescendos*. For the measure of repetitions (m. 48), Liszt specifically indicated *crescendo* and then *decrescendo* to make the music sound bouncy (Musical Example 4.44).

Musical Example 4.44, “La leggierezza”: Dynamic change (m. 48)

Tempo rubato

Tempo rubato is the most important ingredient to achieving lightness and swiftness in this section. It not only solves the problem of matching different numbers of notes between two hands, but also embodies the spirit of romanticism. The prior resistance to the highest A^b in measures 44 and 52 will create a brilliant moment, as though it were a slow-motion film of a person jumping and reaching the highest point before starting to fall. The time before A^b in measure 52 can be longer than that in measure 44 in order to coordinate with the dynamic plan. The prior resistance also works for the peak note D^b in measure 47. In addition to the prior resistance, one can slow down a little bit at the end of both phrases. Nevertheless, the functions are different. The first

slowing down along with the *decrescendo* produces a disappearing effect. In contrast, the second slowing down is for the purpose of expressing the melody as well as informing the modulation to the A^b major for the next section.

Section B¹: T₂ and climax (mm. 53-75)

Phrasing

Eight phrases within irregular period structure are included in section B¹ (4+3+2+2+2+2+2+6) and the division of the phrases is still established upon the tonal change (A^b-modulation-E-F[#]-A^b-modulation-f: vii^o₇-uncertain) as we saw in section B. The ending chord in each phrase determines the tonality of the next phrase and the breath between the phrases is taken after this ending chord (e.g., Musical Example 4.45). As in section A¹, one pulse every two beats still works appropriately in this section.

Musical Example 4.45, “La leggerezza”: Tonality and breath (mm. 60-62)

Melody and bass

The whole section B¹ restates the three motives: C-D^b-F, B-C-D^b, and B-C-D^b-E-F-A^b in different phrases, as it is discussed in “Structure” (p. 108-109). Before the climax, the first two phrases are variants of the ones in section B. In measures 60-65, both the melody and bass are played by the left hand while the accompaniment is performed by right hand. The next phrase contains broken chords in the right hand and important chromatic bass octaves in the left hand instead of melody and bass, respectively. Then, during the climax, Liszt magically applies all the notes from the opening two measures of Introduction to the melody and bass in the climax. The bass first presents these notes for two measures (mm. 68-69) and it becomes melody which is played by alternating two hands in the *presto* passage. The uncertain feeling in the beginning of the piece is completely replaced by the passionate mood in the climax. It seems that the eaglet becomes the tercel, flying from one peak to another. The occurrence of the rolling A-B^b-D^b from measure 72 terminates the climax and is followed by a descending chromatic scale.

Technical issues

This section includes many “transcendental” techniques, such as rapid passagework, voicing in the broken and blocked sixths, irregular rhythmic division, chromatic thirds (in Ossia), ostinato, and chromatic scales. The following discussion will concentrate on two techniques: voicing in the broken sixths of the first phrase and the ostinato in the last phrase. In the first half of the first phrase, the primary melodic notes are played by the right-hand fourth or fifth finger on the offbeat. Whether one plays rolled chords or broken sixths, it is important to put weight on the right palm. Also, one

needs to get used to the “wrong” feeling of playing the offbeat with accents. In the second half of the first phrase, it may be easy to play the melody with the thumb; but the middle voice in the right hand is sometimes an obstacle. The connection of the melodic notes is another problem in the first phrase. Appropriate plans of layered dynamics and tempo rubato will be helpful for achieving this connection. Lastly, it is easy to play the left hand alone, but playing hands together requires time for coordination and balance. The method of practicing only melody and bass several times will help to solve the problem (Musical Example 4.46).

Musical Example 4.46, “La leggerezza”:

Melody, bass, and dynamics in the first phrase of section B¹ (mm. 52-57)

The ostinato A-B^b-D^b can be played in two ways: right hand alone or alternating the two hands. The first method requires a rolling wrist and a relaxed arm. Rather than

playing the ostinato with only the fingers, moving the wrist and arm will release the tension of the fingers as well as helping to control the dynamics easily. The second method may cause imbalanced or incoherent dynamics and note values between the two hands, but it gives both hands more time to relax.

Layered dynamics

As an overview of the whole section, we see a huge *crescendo* from measure 53 to 70, a sustaining of the loud volume in the cadenza, and a quick *decrescendo* in the last two measures, constituting the main dynamic structure. The huge *crescendo* can be discerned from Liszt's markings, such as *crescendo*, *stringendo*, *un poco più mosso*, *sforzando*, *rinforzando*, and *f-ff-fff*. As discussed in the previous etudes, a huge *crescendo* can be identified by the figures in different ways, such as these in Figure 4.2 and 4.3. Moreover, it is significant to have layered dynamics between two hands. The same dynamic change but softer dynamic level for the accompanying hand will support the melodic hand.

Figure 4.2, “La leggierezza”: Spiraling *crescendo*¹¹⁸

Figure 4.3, “La leggierezza”: The second or third phrase as the softest phrase during *crescendo*

Each phrase also has a dynamic structure. For instance, one can make a *crescendo* in the first two measures and then a *decrescendo* in the next two measures in the first

¹¹⁸ Spiraling *crescendo* means a continuous increasing volume with some *diminuendos* during the procession, which feels like an upwards spiral.

phrase (Musical Example 4.46). In the fifth phrase (mm. 64-66), sensitive dynamic changes can be made by means of a descending chromatic motif with *decrescendo* (m. 64) and ascending chromatic motif with *crescendo* in measures 61, 63, and 65 (Musical Example 4.47). A dramatic *decrescendo* will help the performer obtain new room to grow in volume for the following climax.

Musical Example 4.47, “La leggerezza”: Dynamics (mm. 63-65)

Furthermore, Liszt is good at imitating different instrumental sounds through the piano as well as switching the timbre from a whole orchestra to a single instrument. For example, one can imagine a whole orchestra playing measures 66-70, complete with horns, cellos, basses for the lower register, violins, violas, woodwinds for the higher register, and drums for each downbeat. However, when we arrive at the peak chord—E fully diminished seventh in measure 70—Liszt suddenly transfers the great power of an

orchestra to a single instrument for the *presto* passage.¹¹⁹ Even though the texture of the music is compacted to a monophonic line, the single instrument still holds the power by means of virtuosity. The virtuosity is not only related with the technique, but also refers to how a pianist interprets and expresses the music. Throughout the ostinato motif A-B^b-D^b, it is necessary to consider which line gets the loudest volume. Different choices will create diverse effects for the music.

Tempo rubato

T₂ occurs many times in different keys in section B¹. At first, it sings in a higher register and remains in A^b major. Relatively free tempo rubato and an expected pulse on every two beats can be applied to the first phrase in order to convey the romantic and floating feeling. Later, T₂ is restated and modulated by the left hand in the middle voice, along with a busier accompaniment in the top voice and another chromatic motif in the low register (mm. 60-65). All of these changes bring the peaceful stasis to an end. The music requires a more expressive tempo rubato for T₂ and a driving rhythm for the chromatic motif. The chromatic motif with modulations pushes the tempo more in the next phrase so that an *accelerando* can be applied here until the last appearance of the motif in measures 67-68 (Musical Example 4.48). Take time to emphasize the B and C octaves, and the E fully diminished chord, because they are prominent signposts pointing toward the approaching climax. However, they are not the highest point in the climax. The resistance before the E fully diminished chord in measure 70 deserves more time to emphasize the moment. Let the time “float” a little bit in the air after this chord as if the

¹¹⁹ To reinforce the bass note of the climax chord on the downbeat in measure 70, one can use the fingering 1-5-2-1 (upwards) and give the accent on each note for the left hand.

The image displays a musical score for 'The Great Gate of Kiev' by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. The score is written for piano and strings. The piano part is in the upper system, featuring complex chords and arpeggios, with dynamic markings such as *f*, *accelerando*, and *resistance*. The string part is in the lower system, featuring a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with dynamic markings such as *string.*, *ff*, and *fff*. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system ending at measure 8 and the second system starting at measure 8. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is written in a standard musical notation style, with notes, rests, and dynamic markings clearly visible.

Pedal

134

purpose of sustaining the bass note. The climax phrase requires *ff-fff* in the first two measures, which benefit from the pedal. But one also has to preserve a clear bass line, especially in such low registers. Depending on the resonance of the hall, one can adjust the time and the depth of the pedal (e.g., one pedal per beat, frequent changes of the pedal, or gradually deeper pedal). After the climax chord in measure 70, one may wonder when to change the pedal. The Belwin Mills edition suggests no pedal change until one has finished the first six-note motif, but some pianists prefer a new pedal or even no damper pedal for the beginning of the cadenza.¹²⁰ In my opinion, the shallow and vibrato pedal can be applied for the first two measures in the cadenza with *una corda* during the beginning. There is no need to change the damper pedal for the ostinato motif until the appearance of the descending chromatic scale.

Section C (mm. 75-86)

Phrasing

There are many ways to divide the phrases in this mysterious section, based on the principle of different musical elements, such as tonality or melodic contour. No matter what phrase division is made, it is preferable to take a deep breath between measures 79 and 80 so that the section is arranged in two halves. One reason for this is that the bass note F[#] (mm. 80-81) can be understood as the destination of the descending bass line from the first half. In the Belwin Mills edition, it is marked *subito pp* in the beginning of measure 80, which sounds like a new beginning of a phrase.¹²¹ Many

¹²⁰ Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo*, 66.

¹²¹ Franz Liszt, *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo*, 77.

current pianists like Yujia Wang choose the *subito pp* and take a big breath before it for this section.

Melody and bass

The melody in the first half of the section features impressive virtuosity in its chromaticism and irregular rhythmic division. The whirling melody and modulations in the first three measures make the music mysterious as if it is the description of a starry night. Then it goes up in an ascending chromatic scale in the next two measures. The second half shows new material that goes up and down in sequence, using repetition and shapes throughout a wider range of the keyboard.

The bass in the first half modulates in a descending third-relationship (am-fm-c[#]m) at first and it has four descending notes within each key. Then it chromatically goes down until it steadies on note F[#]. After two measures sustaining as F[#] in the second half, it enharmonically changes to the note G^b and continues the descending chromatic scale until it reaches the note C on the downbeat of measure 86.

Layered dynamics

At the surface level, the feeling of rising and falling in melody within each phrase can be expressed through corresponding *crescendo* and *decrescendo*, except in two places: the *subito pp* should be observed in measures 80-81, and one should acknowledge the preferred *crescendo* for the descending third connection in measure 85; both reasons have already been considered in the previous discussion on pages 135 and 115. At a deeper level, the bass controls the main dynamic changes. The lower the bass goes, the louder the sound will be. For example, the left hand emphasizes the low bass D^b (m. 85) more

than the bass D (m. 84), though the right hand makes different dynamic changes for the two measures. The bass not only draws the outline of the primary structure of the section, but also manifests the goal of the section—to chromatically achieve the bass C in the last measure, which is the dominant of the F minor of the next section.

Tempo rubato

Before taking the deep breath between measures 79 and 80, it is practical to slow down a little bit for the last beat (m. 79). To control the timing there, one can conjure up the feeling of riding on the roller coaster. The ascending chromatic scale is as if the roller coaster goes up. When the roller coaster arrives at the highest point, it will not go down right after the climbing, but will gradually slow down and stop for a moment. The repetition of the B-B[#]-C[#]-B[#]-D[#]-C[#] on the last beat and the deep breath depict the moment (Musical Example 4.49).

Musical Example 4.49, “La leggerezza”: Tempo rubato (mm. 78-80)

Liszt marked *accelerando* above the beginning of measure 83 and then *poco ritardando* in the middle of measure 85. To reduce the difficulty of the thirds, it is wise to

hesitate a little in the beginning of measure 83 so that the tempo for the thirds will not be too fast. After the *poco ritardando*, there is a fermata above the note F. Enjoy the time of the fermata, the dissonance of the tritone (B-F), and the experience of riding a roller coaster on a starry night!

Pedal

In the first half, the shallow damper pedal changes once per beat. Then it changes according to the alteration of the bass. For measures 84-85, one needs to treat carefully the balance of the sustaining bass, clearness of the running notes, and the rest signs.

Musical Example 4.50 offers one possibility.

Musical Example 4.50, “La leggerezza”: Damper pedals (mm. 84-85)

The application of the *una corda* will be helpful to create the mysterious feeling and the expression of *dolcissimo egualmente*, such as in measures 74-77 and 80-81.

Section A² (mm. 86-94)

Phrasing

Similar to section C, there is one clear and deep breath in this section, which is after the dominant ninth chord in measure 93. Before this, one may slow down a little bit

at the end of measure 87, but it is better not to take even a quick breath until finishing the downbeat bass note C in measure 88. One may also want to take a breath between measures 89 and 90, but it may disturb the continuity of the music. Tempo rubato is more preferred in this section. Thus, depending on different interpretations of the music, the phrase structure can have different possibilities, such as 4+4+3 or 8+3.

Melody and bass

One risks memory issues in the first four measures of this section because of the similarities to the opening of section A¹. Be aware of the differences between the two sections, such as the direction of the melody and the number of running notes in each measure. The three measures 90, 91, and 92 are mostly repetitive and they form the last peak—the dominant ninth in measure 93. Polyphony emerges for a short while, from the last beat in measure 92 to the end of measure 93 (Musical Example 4.51).

Musical Example 4.51, “La leggerezza”: Polyphonic melody and bass (mm. 92-93)

The bass, in addition to the descending chromatic scale in the first four measures, has an obvious function in this section: the pedal tone C as the dominant preparation for the

return to the tonic. There is no need to give the prior resistance to each bass C in this section, but two of them are important—the ones in measures 86 and 93, which anticipate section A² and the peak respectively.

Layered dynamics

The last peak (m. 93) is not very loud in this etude; it is more akin to homesickness. Instead of a big *crescendo*, Musical Example 4.52 provides another dynamic plan to make the dominant ninth chord outstanding in this section.

The image displays four staves of musical notation for 'La leggerezza' in section A² (mm. 88-93). The notation includes various dynamic markings and performance instructions. The first staff is marked *dolcissimo* and *p*. The second staff is marked *(dolciss.) p*. The third staff is marked *mf* and *pp*. The fourth staff is marked *p*, *più rit.*, and *veloce*. There are pink annotations: a line across the second staff with the text 'No dynamic changes, peaceful', and two ovals on the fourth staff highlighting specific chords.

Musical Example 4.52, “La leggerezza”: Dynamic plan in section A² (mm. 88-93)

Be aware of contrary dynamic changes for the polyphonic melody on the last beat in measure 92. Also, the application of tempo rubato in this measure will not only reduce the difficulty of playing the chromatic sixth, but also make the music more expressive. After the peak, one is free to design the dynamics in the cadenza. Evgeny Kissin makes a *crescendo* to the high D^b and then *decrescendo* for the rest of the measure. Martha Argerich plays a *crescendo* before the D^b and then a *subito pp* at the D^b. Earl Wild does a big *crescendo* until the last D^b in measure 94.

Pedal

It is worthwhile to think about different methods of pedaling for the high D^b. Holding one pedal from the first high D^b to the last one will build a blurred soundscape like impressionism in music. It is as if someone lapses into a dream. Vibrato pedaling for this passage will aid the polyphony and give the D^b another kind of color—like adding sunshine. Moreover, the diverse combinations of pedal and dynamics will mix many different colors for the music.

Coda (mm. 94-98)

Along with the fading blurred soundscape or the single sound of high D^b, the music brings us home through the six-note motif and the F minor key after a long fermata in measure 94. The motif B-C-D^b-E-F-A^b is slightly altered as B-C-D^b-**F-G**-A^b in the next measure at first and naturally slides to the parallel F major key through B-C-D^b-**F-G-A** finally. It is also sung by different voices: from soprano, tenor, to alto in order. Although it has only five measures, this material provides a great opportunity to practice

different dynamics, tempo rubato, and mood for the altered motives. Table 4.5 offers one possibility.

Measure	Dynamics	Tempo rubato	Mood
m. 94	<i>Crescendo</i>	Very free and expressive, with resistance and emphasis for the fermata notes	Excited to see the light at home
m. 95	No dynamic change	Relatively strict rhythm	Peaceful
m. 96	<i>Decrescendo</i>	Gradually slow down and anticipate the F major chord	Linger on the great flying trip

Table 4.5, “La leggierezza”: Contrasts of dynamics, tempo rubato, and mood (mm. 94-96)

No matter what changes occur during these three measures, the bass structure (V-I) should be clearly heard. Moreover, it is better to continue the *decrescendo* and *ritardando* for the last four F major chords. One may consider adding *una corda* for the last two chords as well. Gently put the hands down for the last chord without tension and then release the hands in the air until the sound goes away as if the lightness lasts forever.

Un sospiro

❖ Description of title

As in the other two etudes of *Trois Études de concert*, the melody in the third etude in D^b major is vocally inspired, poetic, and lyrical. In every phrase or section, the melody always goes up at first, which seems to raise expectations. However, it finally goes down and usually ends with three descending notes from the diatonic scale as if somebody were heaving a sigh (Musical Example 4.53). The shape of the melody feels consistent with the meaning of the title “Un sospiro.” In some places, including China, this piece also goes by the name of “The Sea,” in which the feeling of the rolling billow may come out of the broken chords in the accompaniment part throughout the piece.

Musical Example 4.53.1, “Un sospiro”: Melodic shape related to “sigh” in one phrase (mm. 3-5)

Musical Example 4.53.2, “Un sospiro”: Melodic shapes related to “sigh” in one section (mm. 22-30)

❖ Structure

Rachel Beatrice Morin divides this etude into seven strophes and analyzes the form as ABA ternary song form. She calls the opening motif “cross motive,” which is played by hand crossing and written in three-hand notation. She explores the source—*Crux fidelis*—for the motive and states that the etude is composed with “*cantus firmus* variation technique.”¹²² Morin’s discussion on this etude is understandable and interesting. Another viewpoint, perhaps more convincing, is to see the structure as A-B-AB (untraditional ternary form), because the third section is the return of both A and B sections (Table 4.6). Liszt is not the only composer who used this unconventional ternary form. The A-B-AB form also appears in the first section of Brahms’s Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118 no. 2 (1893). The reasons that one might view AB as a combined section or synthesis instead of two sections are based on the unity of the key.

Section	Intro.	A		B			AB		Coda
Material		a	a ¹	b	b ¹ (climax)	b ²	a ²	b ³ (b ⁴)	
Key	D ^b	D ^b	D ^b -A	A-F	F-c [#]	c [#] : V or D ^b : V	D ^b	D ^b	D ^b
Measure	1-2	3-12	13-22	22-30	30-38	38-52	53-62	62-71	72-77
Dynamics	<i>p</i> <i>p</i>			<i>p</i> <i>pp</i>			<i>p</i> ~~~~~		

Table 4.6, “Un sospiro”: Structure

As we can see from Table 4.6, “Un sospiro” contains two primary thematic elements, which we can call “a” and “b.” As we have come to expect from Liszt, thematic transformation is an important feature, as material “b” is derived from part of material “a” (Musical Example 4.54). Material “a” has an arch-like melodic shape and it occurs three

¹²² Rachel Beatrice Morin, 88 and 99-100.

times in the whole piece. Each instance of material “a” has three phrases and the first two phrases feature the pentatonic scale: A^b-B^b-D^b-E^b-F. Materials “a” and “a²” have the same melody with different accompaniments. Liszt artfully changes the melody and the tonality from D^b major to A major through enharmonic modulation (G^b=F[#]) in the third phrase of material “a¹” (Musical Example 4.55). The melody of material “a” is constructed of single notes and is played by crossing hands; “a¹” presents the melody in broken octaves, also with hand crossing hands; and in “a²” we find a single-note melody played by alternating thumbs of the two hands.

Material “b” group, rooted in material “a” group, reveals the same or similar pentatonic rising melody in the first two of the three phrases. Materials “b,” “b¹” and “b⁴” completely follow the intervallic relationship of the rising melody of material “a,” while “b²” and “b³” slightly change some of the intervals (as shown in red in Musical Example 4.54). Material “b” changes the tonality from A major to F major and pushes the music to its climax. In the climax part “b¹,” the main melody in F major is given entirely to the left hand and is followed by a cadenza characterized by a chromatic scale in polyphonic texture. Although “b²” and “b³” have similar structures of melody, bass and texture, they have different keys and endings. Material “b²” in C[#] minor key has a dominant G[#] pedal tone which is enharmonic with the dominant A^b of the D^b major home key. The whole part can be viewed as the preparation for the return to section A. Moreover, Liszt specifically changes the key signature to five flats in measure 52, in which another cadenza is presented above the bass A^b. By contrast, “b³” finally returns to the rising melody (b⁴) and ends with a long sigh (Musical Example 4.54).

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Un sospiro". It is organized into two main sections, each with a vertical line on the left indicating a sequence of musical materials. The top section, labeled "Material 'a'", includes three staves: a single melodic line (mm. 3-5) with a red bracket labeled "m2" and "M2", a single melodic line (mm. 13-15) with fingerings 2, 3, 2, and a piano accompaniment (mm. 53-55) marked "Un poco più mosso", "p dolce", "non legato", and "egualmente". The bottom section, labeled "Material 'b'", includes five staves: a single melodic line (mm. 22-24), a single melodic line (mm. 30-32), a single melodic line (mm. 38-40) with red brackets labeled "m2" and "m3", a single melodic line (mm. 62-64), and a piano accompaniment (mm. 70-71) marked "più lento" and "quasi Arpa". The piano part in the bottom section features complex arpeggiated figures with slurs and accents.

Material "a" (mm. 3-5)

Material "a¹" (mm. 13-15)

Un poco più mosso

p dolce non legato egualmente

Material "a²" (mm. 53-55)

Material "b" (mm. 22-24)

Material "b¹" (mm. 30-32)

Material "b²" (mm. 38-40)

Material "b³" (mm. 62-64)

più lento

quasi Arpa

Material "b⁴" (mm. 70-71)

Musical Example 4.54, "Un sospiro": Materials "a" and "b"

The Musica Budapest edition gives three variations for the extension of the second cadenza (before measure 53) and two variations for the Coda. Regarding the extension, Liszt composed for three different people: Professor Henrik Gobbi, Auguste Rennebaum, and Lina Schmalhausen.¹²³ All three variations are based on material “a.” The performer may choose whether to play the extension or not. Regarding the Coda, the principal conclusion has a descending bass line in third-relationship while the conclusion written with small notes has a descending bass line in a whole-tone scale.

In terms of the dynamic structure, each section except the Coda begins and ends with soft dynamics. In section A, the dynamics gradually grow louder and more passionate. After the “sigh” at the end of section A, section B begins again in *piano*. The dramatic section B includes the loudest place *fortissimo* in the climax “b¹” and the softest place *pianissimo* in the second cadenza. The synthetic section AB is relatively peaceful compared to the previous two sections. The last section Coda is rather short but includes a *crescendo* conclusion.

❖ Main technical issues

The main technical issues in this etude include three-hand effects, arpeggios in the accompaniment, and different scales in the cadenzas. Also, there are a few minor technical issues, such as the connected octaves in material “b” and the irregular rhythmic division in material “b³.” Most of these techniques are fundamental skills for an advanced

¹²³ Franz Liszt, *Studies II*, vol. 2 of *Works for Piano Solo*, ed. Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szélenyi (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1971), 35.

pianist. Hence, this etude is appropriate for a student who wants to start studying Liszt's concert etudes.

The following discussion will concentrate on the three-hand effect which is the most characteristic technique in this etude. It is composed of the melody in the highest staff and the accompaniment in the middle and low staves. Both melody and accompaniment are played by crossing hands: the notes with downward stems are to be played by left hand and those with upward stems by right hand. In learning this piece at the piano, the first and also the most crucial step is to understand the structure of the melody and bass before playing all the notes as written in the score. To simplify the material, one can play the melody with the right hand and the bass with the left hand. However, it is not enough merely to play the principal notes of the two voices. What is more important is to perform these notes with musicality as if one were on the stage. The bass dominates the dynamic structure and the tempo rubato while the soprano sings expressively to make the music move forward as well as up and down. For example, the bass stays on the tonic note D^b in the first two phrases of material "a." The 12 D^bs should be played variously to control the phrasing. The Musical Example 4.56 provides one interpretive possibility for the bass D^b; in this regard, the numbers marked in the excerpt indicate suggested dynamic levels (1 for the least and 3 for the most). For the melody, both phrases can be performed with a *crescendo* and then a *decrescendo*, but the second phrase will probably be played more emotionally than the first one.

The second step is to practice the running notes. Generally speaking, one measure contains 28 sixteenth notes, which can be divided into seven four-note groups, four seven-note groups, and two fourteen-note groups. The practice of diverse rhythmic

patterns among different note groups is good for achieving as even flow technically.

Musically, since the melody and bass voices are already expressive, it is better to play the running notes simply and softly. But the accompaniment part needs to be played with dynamic changes when the melody has a rest (Musical Example 4.56).

The next step is to bring all the notes together. Prepare the crossing notes early by looking at them before playing them. Also, it is important to change the touch when the hands shift between the melody and the accompaniment. The touch relates to both articulation and dynamics, which is the most difficult part in this technique. Listen actively and make the music “stereo” with vertical layered dynamics as if actually having three hands to deal with the individual voices: one for melody, one for bass, and one for the running-note accompaniment.

cantando
*)
dolce con grazia

sempre Pedale

resistance

Musical Example 4.56, “Un sospiro”:

Musical plan in the first two phrases of material “a” (mm. 3-8)

❖ Sectional analysis

Section A: material “a” and “a¹” (mm. 3-22)

Phrasing

Each material has three phrases, presented in the irregular structure: 3+3+4. The first two are antecedent phrases and the third is a consequent phrase, as Morin points out.¹²⁴ None of the phrases start on the downbeat, but the rest on the downbeat is an important signal for a singer’s breath. The main pulse occurs on the downbeat of each measure.

Tempo rubato

The two antecedent phrases in material “a” and “a¹” have the same melody, giving opportunity to vary the rubato. One such possibility appears in Musical Example 4.56. For the consequent phrase of material “a,” there is no marking linked with tempo changes in Busoni’s edition. The Edition Peters score indicates *poco ritardando* from the third beat in measure 11 and the fermata above the last G^b in the accompaniment part.¹²⁵ The Busoni edition suggests tempo contrast for material “a¹,” indicating a deceleration on the fourth beat in measure 21 and temporarily stops on the F[#]4 in the melody (Musical Example 4.57). Liszt also marked *appassionato*, *smorzando* and *tenuto* for the melodic notes in the latter consequent phrase, which dramatically shifts the moods from hope to disappointment. If the first consequent phrase describes a languid sigh, the second one depicts a long and heavy sigh. Additionally, Liszt specifically indicated the fingering 3 and 2 for the broken octaves in material “a¹” (mm. 13-21) and “wished that the theme not

¹²⁴ Rachel Beatrice Morin, 88.

¹²⁵ Franz Liszt, *Etudes*, vol. 4 of *Franz Liszt: Klavierwerke*, ed. Emil don Sauer (Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1917), 189.

be taken too slowly,” though they are technically more difficult to be played than the melodies in material “a.”¹²⁶

Musical Example 4.57, “Un sospiro”:

Tempo rubato in the consequent phrase of material “a¹” (mm. 21-22)

Pedal

The damper pedal markings from Busoni’s edition work for the antecedent phrases, but it is better to change pedals for new bass notes in the consequent phrases. The soft pedal can be applied in material “a,” especially the antecedent phrases, to create various colors from material “a¹.”

Section B: material “b” (mm. 22-30)

Technical issues

Similar to materials “a” and “a¹,” material “b” also has three phrases in irregular structure: 2+2+4. The first two phrases with rising melody, derived from material “a,” deals with the technique of crossing hands; the third phrase concerns connected octaves that appear in the right hand as melody. In measure 29, Liszt suggested using both hands, rather than right hand alone, to play the octaves that appear above the fermata, and that it

¹²⁶ August Göllicher, *The piano master classes of Franz Liszt, 1884-1886 : diary notes of August Göllicher*, ed. Wilhelm Jerger, trans. Richard Louis Zimdars (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 31.

should sound like “a fairly long whirlpool.”¹²⁷ Also, the master marked *con forza* with *crescendo* for the octaves, to push the music to its high point. A *non-legato* articulation and a deep touch to the keys will help to achieve the effect. For the D^b octave with *staccatissimo*, one can apply an upward wrist movement to enhance the dynamics.

Tempo rubato

Compared to the *cantando* melodies in the material “a” group, the melodies in material “b” are rushing, agitated, and impassioned. To correspond with the emotions of the melody, it is appropriate to push the tempo a little bit in some places, such as the second phrase and the first measure (m. 27) of the third phrase. Conversely, when it goes to the highest note E^b6 of the phrase (m. 28), it is reasonable to ritard the tempo before the note so that the audience can feel the sense of anxiety. After the E^b6, the application of *ritenuto e accelerando* (from a tempo slower than the original one to a faster tempo) will cater to the dynamics *più crescendo* for the descending octaves (mm. 28-29). Then a similar resistance prior to the D^b with accent (m. 29) will give the note more power. When the arpeggio accompaniment for the D^b finishes, one can release the pedal and take a breath to prepare for playing the quasi-trill C and B octaves. In order to make the resentful sigh prominent (mm. 29-30), it is feasible to take time for the D^b with *staccatissimo* (Musical Example 4.58).

¹²⁷ Ibid.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Un sospiro". It consists of two systems of staves. The top system features a piano (p) part in the left hand and a violin part in the right hand. The piano part is marked "fagitato con passionato" and includes a green box highlighting a specific passage. The violin part is marked "Push the tempo" and "resistance", with a green box highlighting a specific passage. The bottom system continues the piano part, marked "accelerando", and includes a green box highlighting a specific passage. The violin part is marked "con forza" and "Take time", with a green box highlighting a specific passage. The score includes various performance instructions such as "ritenuto e accel.", "più cresc.", and "impetuoso".

Musical Example 4.58, "Un sospiro":

Tempo rubato in the third phrase of material "b" (mm. 27-30)

Section B: material "b¹" (mm. 30-38)

Melody and bass

Both melody and bass are played by the left hand in this material. It is not difficult to emphasize the bass F and melodic octave notes in the first two phrases (mm. 30-34), because the two voices occur at different times. But from the third phrase (the fourth beat of measure 34), the melody and bass appear in one blocked chord, though they are mostly played through appoggiatura or broken style. It is necessary to make both outer notes clear and highlighted, and to release the tension of the inner notes. It might not be clear which is the primary melodic note of the last chord (German augmented sixth in C[#] minor), choosing between the E octave played with the right hand and the C[#] played with the left hand (m. 37). The E should probably be the preferred melodic note due to the accent above it. Moreover, while the E octave is not the highest melodic note in the

climax part, it is certainly the peak moment. To make it sound significant, one can initially play both the melody and bass notes (E and A), followed by the inner notes together (instead of playing a broken chord from the lowest note to the highest one).

The cadenza is composed of polyphonic melodies that are established upon a descending chromatic scale played in minor sixths and ending with two chords. The German augmented sixth appears again as the last chord in the cadenza and it is resolved to the dominant chord in the next measure. Liszt writes *ritardando* for the last two chords (m. 37) and then accentuates the suspended note A (m. 38) in a strong metrical position. He accomplishes this by underlining the particular harmonic progression in C[#] minor. As a result, the melody and bass notes deserve extra attention here.

Layered dynamics

It is true that Liszt used terms *impetuoso* and *marcato* to express the feelings of haste and violence in material “b¹,” but it will make the audience feel fretful or utterly bored if the whole climax part is in a constant state of huge and powerful sound. Sometimes the backing down the volume will give the climax moment more intensity, as if the darkest hour is nearest the dawn. For example, the second phrase of this material can be played as an echo to the first phrase so that the third phrase can have more room to increase the volume to the peak. This also creates a sense of layering in the horizontal dynamics.

The vertical layered dynamics can be built by means of different dynamic shapes in the three voices. The bass line functions as an anchor, heavy and strong. The middle melodic line has a *crescendo* in each phrase. The upper accompanying voice frequently

changes dynamics according to the direction of the music, which sounds like rolling waves.

Rather than a strict *crescendo-decrescendo* pair for the cadenza, wavelike dynamic changes are a more expressive approach (Musical Example 4.59). Be sure that there is dynamic contrast among the first three wavelike dynamic changes (in the descending chromatic line) and also among the next four repeated patterns. With respect to the last two chords in the cadenza, in addition to highlighting the melody and bass notes, it is also necessary to shape them in a small but sensitive *crescendo* and then a quick *decrescendo* for the first half of measure 38 (Musical Example 4.59).

The musical score for Musical Example 4.59, "Un sospiro", is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 37-38) shows a piano part with a descending chromatic line in the right hand and a more active bass line. The tempo is marked "Presto". The second system (measures 39-40) continues the piano part with repeated patterns and dynamic markings like "P", "P P P P P", and "P P". The tempo is marked "rit." and "dimin. e rallent.". The third system (measures 41-42) features a vocal part with a descending chromatic line and a piano part with repeated patterns. The tempo is marked "languendo" and "sotto voce". The score includes various dynamic markings and performance instructions.

Musical Example 4.59, "Un sospiro":

Dynamic and pedal changes in the first cadenza (mm. 37-38)

Tempo rubato

If the first phrase is played a hasty and driving way, the second one can be performed at a relatively even pace in order to make the two different. For the third phrase, it is easy to accelerate if there is resistance before the climactic German augmented sixth chord. The ending of the cadenza needs to slow down, whether the abbreviation “*rit.*” represents *ritardando* or *ritenuto*. But it is necessary for a musician to make differentiate among *rallentando*, *ritardando* and *ritenuto*. The first two are defined as “slowing down gradually” while the third one means “a more sudden reduction in tempo.”¹²⁸ After the ritard ending of measure 37, Liszt did not mark *a tempo* for the next measure, which gives the performer room to create an individual *tempo rubato* for the end of material “b¹.” One possibility is to keep the slow tempo for the first half of measure 38 so that the sigh motif (A-G[#]) will be portrayed obviously.

Pedal

Apart from pedal changes for new bass notes, it is also essential to replace the pedal for different chords, even though they may share the same bass note (Musical Example 4.60).

P P P

Musical Example 4.60, “Un sospiro”: Pedal changes (mm. 30-31)

¹²⁸ *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. “*rallentando*,” “*ritardando*,” and “*ritenuto*.”

In light of the cadenza in measure 37, the bass A (on the third beat) should not be released until the running notes above *presto*. The vibrato pedal is more applicable to the *crescendo* passage in the cadenza. Then one may apply a shallow pedal for the repeated melodies in the *decrescendo* passage. After that, changing the pedal for each note is helpful to perform the articulation as well as to make the melody clear (Musical Example 4.59). In measure 38, the melodic pedal change can be used to shape the sigh motif (Musical Example 4.59).

Section B: material “b²” (mm. 38-52)

Melody and bass

Material “b²” not only alters the intervallic relationship in the rising pentatonic melody, but also extends the second phrase (mm. 40-46) through the bass line (Musical Example 4.61). Both melody and bass are connected with a modified octatonic scale. This description of the rising melodic notes is partly based upon Richard Bass’s analysis of symmetrical octave partitions, which is discussed on pages 46 and 47 above. The original octatonic scale is B[#]-C[#]-D[#]-E-F[#]-G-A-A[#]-B[#]. Liszt selected B[#]-C[#]-E-F[#]-A-B[#] for the rising melody; the last three notes have a symmetrical intervallic relationship, a minor third between each pitch. The bass line displays an interrupted descending octatonic scale. The original octatonic scale is G[#]-F[#]-F-D[#]-D-C-B-A-G[#]. However, Liszt replaced the fourth note D[#] by E. In the third phrase (mm. 46-52), the melody mostly stays within one chord, whether it is the dominant minor ninth chord (G[#]-B[#]-D[#]-F[#]-A) in C[#] minor or the enharmonic dominant seventh chord (A^b-C-E^b-G^b) in D^b major (m. 52), though it jumps

to a B minor ninth chord for a while (mm. 49-51). Thus, it is valuable to consider the design of dynamics and tempo for the dominant note G[#]/A^b.

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, likely from a vocal or instrumental setting. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. Red boxes highlight specific notes in the melody, and blue boxes highlight specific notes in the bass line. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The first system shows a melodic phrase with a slur. The second system includes the word 'cre' above the staff. The third system includes the word 'do' above the staff. The fourth system includes the words 'leggerissimo volante' and 'acceler.' above the staff.

Musical Example 4.61, “Un sospiro”:
Melody and bass in the second phrase of material “b²” (mm. 40-46)

Technical issues

The second cadenza of this piece is based upon the D^b major scale with the additional notes D natural and G natural. As in the first cadenza, the two melodic lines appear a sixth apart. The difficulty of this passage is playing the running notes for both hands simultaneously at a fast tempo (*velocissimo*). To solve this problem, three points should be noticed: finding a good fingering, hearing the pulse on the first notes of each group, and applying tempo rubato for the notes at the turning point, as indicated in Musical Example 4.62. The fingering given in the Edition Peters score works well.¹²⁹ For the pulse, there is no need to play each on-beat note with a sharp accent. A slight emphasis on these notes helps to keep the two hands together. With the same goal, a pianist can apply a short resistance after the notes at the turning point and then speed up with the pulse on each G (right hand) and B (left hand). Shallow and frequent changes of pedal are very important for the articulation of *legato* and the clarity of sound (Musical Example 4.62). Be sure that the last pedal contains only the sound of the minor third (E^b-G^b).

¹²⁹ Franz Liszt, *Etudes*, vol. 4 of *Franz Liszt: Klavierwerke*, 194.

Musical Example 4.63, “Un sospiro”: Dynamic changes (mm. 46-49)

Tempo rubato

The first two phrases sound lazy and languid, as indicated by the term “*languendo*.” Even though Liszt did not write *a tempo* in the beginning of the material, it is appropriate to boost the tempo faster than the ending of the first cadenza and slower than the original tempo in the opening of the piece. The first reason is to indicate the new beginning of material “b²” and the second reason is to leave space to speed up from measure 47. The third phrase, *accelerando*, tends to be light and volatile, in keeping with the marking “*volante*.” To make the arpeggio easier technically, it is essential to plan different lengths of resistance after each rolled chord. The longest resistance can be taken after the G[#] minor ninth chord in measure 46, since this is the loudest moment. One can also apply a short resistance before the B minor ninth chord in the softest place (m. 49), so as to draw attention to the chord change as well as to manage the three-octaves

arpeggio more easily. At the end of the cadenza, on the fermata above the quarter rest, hold your breath and enjoy the quiet moment until the resonance of the minor third (E^b-G^b) disappears in the air.

Section AB as synthesis: material “a²” (mm. 53-62)

Tempo rubato

Now it is time to breathe again, and the first breath is also the first pulse in material “a².” To make the feeling of one pulse per measure (on the downbeat) clearer, a short resistance can be added before the melodic note E^b in measure 54 (Musical Example 4.64).

Musical Example 4.64, “Un sospiro”: Breathing and pulse (mm. 53-55)

Although this material is marked *Un poco più mosso*, it is proper to elongate the time in measures 60-61 (Musical Example 4.65). There are three purposes for doing this: (1) to emphasize the dominant bass note A^b, which prepares for the return of tonic in D^b major; (2) to create a tempo contrast with material “a,” which has the same melody as this material; and (3) to show off “transcendental” skill in a faster tempo at the third beat in measure 61. Another fermata above a quarter rest occurs after the cadenza-like passage. It

is better to take less time on this one than the one at the end of the second material “b²,” because there are three more melodic notes (the sigh motif) after the fermata.

Musical Example 4.65, “Un sospiro”: Melody, bass, and tempo rubato (mm. 60-61)

Pedal

The score published by Edition Peters provides detailed pedal markings.¹³⁰ Most of these pedal marks in the first two phrases seem to sustain for two beats. For example, Sauer suggests two pedals, one on the first and the other on the third beat for measure 54 and 57. Doing this will probably blur the harmonic progression in these measures.¹³¹ However, it is preferable to take a new pedal with each chord change, as the Edition Peters score suggests for the third phrase.

Section AB as synthesis: material “b³” and “b⁴” (mm. 62-71)

Melody and bass

The first two phrases of material “b³” are established on the same melodic and bass structure as those of material “b².” However, in the second phrase, the bass line forms a complete descending octatonic scale from D^{b3} to D^{b2}. Material “b⁴” is the third

¹³⁰ Franz Liszt, *Etudes*, vol. 4 of *Franz Liszt: Klavierwerke*, 194-195.

¹³¹ Ibid.

phrase of material “b³.” Its rising melody displays the opening theme for the last time, which conveys unity and cohesion for the whole piece. Furthermore, it proves that Liszt’s innovative ternary form A-B-AB interacts with thematic transformation. The bass line in material “b⁴” traverses a descending third-relationship (D^b-B^b-G^b-E^b).

Layered dynamics

In contrast to the opening languid feeling or subsequent passionate emotion in “b².” For material “b³,” Liszt again writes the term *armonioso* [harmonious] that he used in Introduction of the piece. This implies that in this material Liszt wants to return to the initial dynamics and mood. Though he does not give any other dynamic signs except the *crescendo* at the beginning of the second phrase, the whole sections seems content to stay in the range of *pp-mp*. Vertically, the bass line is the most significant voice to be heard.

For the local dynamics, many pianists apply a *crescendo* from *pianissimo* for the first phrase (mm. 62-64). But Edition Peters marks *calando* with bracket above it, which is also a dynamic plan worthy of consideration.¹³² For the second long phrase (mm. 64-69), Liszt specifies an increase in volume as well. Nevertheless, a *subito piano* for the chord in measure 66 will not only grab the heart of the audience, but also gives the performer more room to increase the volume (Musical Example 4.66). The rising melody of the third phrase (material “b⁴”) can be played either *crescendo* or *decrescendo*, depending on which mood the pianist wants to express. The rising melody with a *crescendo* seems to refer to a resilient hope while the *decrescendo* feels like one has already lost faith. Yet the dynamics should finally taper down for the sigh motif in the phrase.

¹³² Franz Liszt, *Etudes*, vol. 4 of *Franz Liszt: Klavierwerke*, 195.

Musical Example 4.66, “Un sospiro”: Dynamic change (mm. 64-67)

Tempo rubato

Consistent with the *subito piano* at the beginning of measure 66, it is better to roll the right-hand chord relatively slowly. However, to avoid monotony, there is no need to play each chord with the same emphasis and resistance. Moreover, these chords (mm. 66-69) are already marked *poco a poco rallentando*. After measure 69, the music becomes *più lento* and sounds like a harp. Be aware of difference in note values between the half note A^b and quarter notes B^b and D^b, even though the tempo is gradually slower. The same suggestion can be applied for the sigh motif and Coda.

Coda (mm. 72-77)

The last section starts with a quarter rest which here indicates breath and pulse—as well as heartbreak. Edition Peters marks the pedal from the first beat of measure 71 to the second beat of measure 72. This works for phrase, but may compromise the local

effect of the quarter rest. Releasing the pedal on the downbeat of measure 72 will better interpret the rest. Furthermore, the rest without the pedal sounds like a tear falling silently. The *decrescendo* melody within this measure also needs clear pedals changes (Musical Example 4.67).

P Musical Example 4.67, “Un sospiro”: Pedals and dynamics (mm. 71-77)

After that, the melody goes up whereas the bass presents another chain of descending thirds after material “b⁴.” Since the chords change only every two beats, at this tempo it is helpful to “sing” the melodic half notes as if they were continuous eighth notes (e.g., D^bD^bD^bD^b-E^bE^bE^bE^b ...), so as to keep the music flowing. In measures 72-77, the harmonies gradually carry us home to D^b. During this inevitable progression, the mediant major chord (m. 76) is a surprise. Desire to return home, along with the contrary motion of the hands, suggests a hint of *crescendo* for the end of the piece (Musical Example 4.67). As Wilson L. McIntosh points out, these final harmonies create “a most poignant and effective close.”¹³³

¹³³ Wilson Legare McIntosh, Jr., “A Study of the Technical and Stylistic Innovations of Franz Liszt as Demonstrated in an Analysis of Selected Etudes” (DMA diss., Columbia University Teachers College, 1983), 213.

Waldesrauschen

❖ Information about the Publication and Description of the Title

The *Zwei Konzertetüden* (S. 145) were composed in 1862 and first published by Cotta'sche Buchhandlung in Stuttgart (Germany) in 1863, then by Trautwein in Berlin in 1869, as Alan Walker points out.¹³⁴ Liszt wrote these last two etudes, "Waldesrauschen" and "Gnomensreigen," for Lebert and Stark's *Klavierschule*; he dedicated both pieces to his pupil Dionys Pruckner.¹³⁵ Like the three etudes in the *Trois Études de concert*, the titles of the two etudes in the *Zwei Konzertetüden* might not have come directly from Liszt himself; but he is known to have used these names himself in the 1870s.¹³⁶ Although the two concert etudes were composed during Liszt's tragic years, when he quit his job because of the opposition of his colleagues and lost his son and elder daughter, they were not the typical products of his late musical style. On the contrary, both of them almost kept the stylistic characteristics of his Weimar years and embodied his love for virtuosic piano music.

"Waldesrauschen" (Forest Murmurs) is one of Liszt's most vividly depictive pieces. The sixteenth-note sextuplets throughout the piece refer to the many forms of wind, from breezes and strong winds to windstorms, and the subsequent reaction of the forest. Liszt also carefully crafted dynamics, tempo, articulation, expression, and modulation to reflect the play of shadow and light, which may have influenced the sound

¹³⁴ Alan Walker, "Liszt," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 2001), 14: 810.

¹³⁵ Alan Walker, *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Alan Walker, *Ibid.*

colors in some of Claude Debussy's piano works. The etude is given an evocative description by S. Sitwell:

"Its effect is really that of the wind in a pine wood; in one of those German or Bohemian woods where the lines of straight stems are like an arm of lances, and the boughs droop down, not so much as leaves but as tassels, which the wind sways and dashes to and fro. One of the forests, in fact, of Altdorfer, with the prospect of a knight in armor is to ride by, or an anchorite at the mouth of his cave."¹³⁷

B. Arnold mentions that Queen Elizabeth of Romania created a poem about

"Waldesrauschen" after hearing it.¹³⁸ In his letter of response, Liszt wrote:

"... Similarly, I recognize it again in the ravishing inspiration of Carmen Sylva [pen name of the Queen] in connection with one of my little works. It at one and the same time abashes me and fills me with pride. Infinitely better than my poor musical notes has the royal poet known how to express the *Waldesrauschen* and the mysterious murmurings of the forest...."¹³⁹

This etude has garnered many compliments from royalty and scholars across the years; it is also a compliment that this work is a favorite in the concert repertory of many famous pianists around the world, including Claudio Arrau (Chile), Evgeny Kissin (Russia), Earl Wild (USA), and Marc-André Hamelin (Canada).

¹³⁷ Sacheverell Sitwell, *Liszt*, rev.ed. (London: Cassell, 1955), 247.

¹³⁸ Ben Arnold, ed., *The Liszt Companion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 165

¹³⁹ Franz Liszt, *Selected Letters*, trans. and ed. Adrian Williams (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 906.

❖ Structure

“Waldesrauschen” is another etude whose musical form is based on thematic transformation. Wilson McIntosh indicates that “the single theme is treated in an almost Baroque manner, in that it is continually spun out and unfolded in something like a ‘stream of consciousness’ fashion.”¹⁴⁰ The monothematic structure unfolds through variation of the melody (e.g., extension, shortening, and decoration), rhythmic change, registral change, textural change (e.g., invertible counterpoint and polyphony), modulation, and transposition (Musical Example 4.68). On account of the thematic transformation, this etude has a variation-like form; it is also mixed with elements of sonata form (Table 4.7).

It resembles variation form because the theme never loses the essential identity no matter what alterations are made. Even in the second climax (mm. 71-87), the material shows typical features, such as the syncopated rhythm and the descending direction of the melody, of the original theme (e.g., m. 72 and 74), though this excerpt cannot be viewed as a theme. However, some variations are not completed. For instance, variations “a²” and “a³” are more like motivic development. Also, one of variations, “a¹” returns like a recapitulation in the middle of the piece. Thus, it is a variation-like form, not a typical variation set.

Some traits of sonata-allegro form appear in this etude, but they are not the dominant form of the piece. Traditionally, the standard sonata form contains two themes and three sections – exposition, development, and recapitulation. The two themes usually

¹⁴⁰ Wilson Legare McIntosh, Jr., “A Study of the Technical and Stylistic Innovations of Franz Liszt as Demonstrated in an Analysis of Selected Etudes” (DMA diss., Columbia University Teachers College, 1983), 214-5.

appear for the first time with a specific tonal relationship I-V or i-III in the exposition. In the development section, the motives of the main themes appear in new keys, often fragmented or otherwise modified; new material may also turn up in the development. The reprise usually includes a double return, in which the two main themes are displayed again in the home key.

However, in “Waldesrauschen,” the single theme is exposed twice in D^b major with slight changes the second time (“a¹”), within section A; then the theme develops by means of shortening, extension, modulation, and textural change in section A¹; in section A², it returns to the original theme in D^b major but appears in the form of “a¹,” which sounds like recapitulation within a sonata-allegro form. Nevertheless, there is only one theme, which rules out the possibility that this is a sonata form typical of Liszt’s time, even if it has some characteristics of that traditional form. Looking at the etude in this way is helpful for understanding the structure of theme and tonality. For instance, despite the many sequential treatments or chromatic modulations in the etude, the main key change in the three big sections A, A¹, and A² forms an ascending third relationship—D^b-F-A-D^b, which is one of Liszt’s favorite compositional approaches.

The dynamic structure embodies diverse conditions within the forest under the influence of different kinds of wind, reflecting the beauty and power of nature. The dynamics range from *ppp* to *fff*. As shown in Table 4.7, one of the softest places occurs at the end of the “a” and the other at the end of the piece. The piece has two climaxes: measures 55-60 and 71-87. Compared to Liszt’s other concert etudes, this one contains more intense or surprising dynamic changes, demonstrating the range of expression in Romantic music, inspired by the charm of nature. For example, the original theme has an

overall tendency of *crescendo* during the first 13 measures, but it suddenly decreases in volume to *ppp* in the last five beats. It seems that the music is disappearing into the air; however, the following variation “a¹” begins at *mezzo forte* with *tre corde* (Musical Example 4.69). These dynamic changes sound as if incalculable wind fills the forest with vigor for a while; then it is as smooth as glass for another while. More examples of local dynamic changes will be discussed later in the sectional analysis.

Musical Example 4.68.1
"Waldesrauschen":
Theme with
rhythmic and
registral change
(mm. 15-16)

Musical Example 4.68.2
"Waldesrauschen":
Shortened theme
with decoration
and intervallic change
in F major
(mm. 30-31)

Musical Example 4.68.3,
"Waldesrauschen":
Extended theme
with polyphonic
texture in F major
(mm. 32-36)

Musical Example 4.68.4,
"Waldesrauschen":
Shortened theme
with double counterpoint
and modulation
(mm. 45-48)

Section	A		A ¹ (theme with big changes)		A ² (Recapitulation-like)		Coda
Theme	a: original theme	a ¹ : original theme with slight change regarding rhythm and register	a ² : shortened and extended theme, also with intervallic change	a ³ : shortened theme with double counterpoint (1 st climax included)	a ^{1'} : restatement of the original theme, but in the style of a ¹ with different ending	2 nd climax: not have a theme, but in the shadow of part of the original theme	a ⁴ : theme with intervallic change
Key	D ^b -modulation	D ^b -modulation	F-A	Modulation	D ^b -modulation	E/c [#] -D ^b	D ^b
Measure	1-14	15-29	29-44	45-60	61-70	71-87	87-97
Dynamics	<i>pp</i> < > <i>ppp</i>	<i>mf</i> < >	<i>pp</i> ~~~~~	< > <i>fff</i>	<i>f</i> < >	<i>fff</i> < >	<i>pp</i> > <i>ppp</i>

Table 4.7, “Waldesrauschen”: Structure

Musical Example 4.69, “Waldesrauschen”: Unexpected dynamic changes (mm. 11-16)

❖ Main technical issues

This etude focuses on the technique of playing running sixteenth-note sextuplets, requiring most performers to spend time practicing with rhythmic patterns and gradual increase of tempo. Musical Example 4.70 depicts five different rhythmic patterns: (a) three-note figure with fermata on the first note; (b) three-note figure with fermata on the second note; (c) three-note figure with fermata on the third note; (d) six-note figure with fermata on the first note; (e) six-note figure with fermata on the third note. The running notes must be even and the prolonged note needs to be performed with a relaxed upward movement of the wrist. Regarding the tempo practice, the appropriate performance tempo of this piece is around $\text{♩} = 100\text{-}108$, so possible gradual speeding up of tempo for practice might be $\text{♩} = 50, 60, 72, 84, 92, 100$, and 108 each time. Once maximum speed is reached,

one may use the metronome with the unit of half beat, such as $\text{♩} = 42, 46, 50, \text{ and } 54$ for the purpose of hearing the pulse in larger units.

Musical Example 4.70, “Waldesrauschen”: Practice of different rhythmic patterns

The sixteenth-note sextuplet occurs in three forms: ostinato, including a blocked third (e.g., the opening of the piece), a version whose first note is melodic or bass note (e.g., mm. 15-28), and a texture played by alternating the two hands (e.g., m. 29). The last form is the easiest among the three to manage technically. The second form requires a little more emphasis and time for the first note of the sextuplet. In the first form, the blocked third may cause problems such as sore arms or playing the two notes asynchronously. One solution is to use the wrist to loosen the weight of the arm by drawing a circle with the wrist for each sextuplet. The blocked third is played with the upward wrist every time, which aims to give both the fourth and the fifth fingers the same surface on which to stand. Another solution is mental practice, away from the keyboard. In Musical Example 4.70, one may find that rhythmic pattern “e” is easier to play than “d,” because the direction of the melody in “e” is more comfortable for the right hand. Hence, it will be helpful to think of the blocked third as the first note of the sextuplet rather than as the third. The first ostinato form may have also influenced later composers.

For example, Ravel's "Ondine" from the suite *Gaspard de la Nuit* begins with a similar ostinato technique in the accompaniment.¹⁴¹

Another technical issue is the connected octaves that act as a melody in this piece. In most cases, the high notes are linked with each other, since it is hard to connect the low notes which are all played by the thumb. Sliding down the thumb is one method to use in bonding the low notes. Therefore, it is valuable to practice only the top voice with the necessary but comfortable fingering which usually contains the third, fourth and fifth fingers. Pedaling is also important for this technique. Shallow pedal with delicate changes will be helpful in achieving a *legato* sound.

❖ Sectional analysis

Section A: theme "a" (mm. 1-14)

Melody and bass

The melody gently sings in the low voice while the accompaniment part whispers in the high voice for the original theme. Both voices can be viewed as simple scales, arpeggios, and chords with added notes. Liszt decorated the descending melody on the basis of a diatonic scale and made it special with the opening syncopated rhythm. The ascending melodies are built upon arpeggios (Musical Example 4.71).

¹⁴¹ Wilson Legare McIntosh, Jr., 219.

Musical Example 4.71, “Waldesrauschen”:

Main melody based upon diatonic scale and arpeggio (mm. 2-5)

There is no bass voice in this material, but the understood harmonies can replace the bass when intentionally practicing a simplified version. For example, one can play the melody with the left hand, along with blocked dominant chords (Ab major) four times each bar in the right hand during measures 1-3; then the blocked tonic chord (Db major) appears in the same way during measures 4-5 (Musical Example 4.72).

Musical Example 4.72, “Waldesrauschen”:

Performance practice of simplified melody and harmony (mm. 2-4)

The order of these chords is: A^b major (m. 1) – D^b major (m. 4) – A^b major (m. 6) – D^b major (m. 8) – C[#] major (m. 9.1) – F[#] minor (m. 9.2) – E major (m. 10.2) – E augmented (11. 2) – C[#] minor (m. 11.4) – D major (m. 12.3) – D[#] diminished (m. 13.1) – A major (m. 13.3) – A augmented (13.4) – F[#] minor (m. 14). The harmony fluctuates between I and V in D^b major in the first eight measures; then, in the next six measures, Liszt uses

linear harmonies that move chromatically, with the exception of one whole step (A-B) in measures 9.2-10.2 (Musical Example 4.73).

The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano. Each system consists of a treble and a bass staff. Red boxes are drawn around specific chords in the treble staff of each system, highlighting the linear harmonic progression. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1 through 5. Performance markings such as *poco*, *poco cre*, *scen*, *do*, *poco rallent. smorzando*, and *ppp* are present throughout the systems.

Musical Example 4.73: Linear harmonies in ascending chromatic motion (mm. 9-14)

Phrasing

There are three phrases and one introduction-like first measure in this part, and syncopated rhythm signals the beginning of each phrase. Because of the irregular phrase structure (1+4+6+3), it is helpful to apply one pulse each measure here. The opening three measures in the first two phrases are the same, except for the grace notes that Liszt adds in the second phrase. After the opening three measures, the first phrase stays in D^b major, but the second one modulates sequentially after the enharmonic chord D^b major/C[#] major (mm. 8-9). The third phrase sounds like E major, but it finally returns to D^b major

in variation “a¹.” In addition to the breath between each phrase, a quick breath is also needed after each *staccato* note with slur (Musical Example 4.71).

Layered dynamics

The horizontal dynamic flow of the original theme has already been discussed as part of the overall dynamic structure (p. 172-173), which is summarized in Table 4.7. Regarding vertical dynamics, since the melody is *pianissimo* from the beginning, it is necessary to make the right hand softer than the left hand and to keep it as soft as possible in measures 1-8. If the melody is the description of wind, the accompaniment will be the reaction of the leaves. One could also hear the accompaniment as the wind, with the melody being the experience of the protagonist. As a result, one can support the melody through corresponding dynamic change in the accompaniment during measures 9-14. In light of the local dynamics, since the first two phrases are similar to each other in the beginning, a pianist can keep the first one peaceful in *pp*, but for the second one create more sensitive dynamic changes according to the directions of the melody. The surprising dynamic change in the third phrase has also been noted in the previous discussion (p. 172-173 and 176).

Tempo rubato

There are two kinds of note values for the melodic notes in the original theme: quarter note and eighth note, which results in two sorts of tempo rubato: resistance before or after the longer note and slight *agitato* speed or *poco rallentando* for a chain of shorter notes. For instance, one can emphasize the first quarter note G^b (m. 2) and give a little bit of resistance after it, which aims to announce the beginning of the melody as well as to show the typical syncopated rhythm of the piece. In measure 5, a short resistance before

the quarter note B^b is useful to indicate arrival point for the melody. During the modulation (mm. 9-11), a slightly driving tempo is useful, associated with the increasing volume. On the other hand, a *poco rallentando* works for *smorzando ppp* in the last measure. Since the rhythm is simple in the theme, one needs to create varied rubato at different points so as to make the music expressive. However, there is no need for excessive tempo rubato in each phrase.

Pedal

The Busoni edition of this piece offers clear pedal marks including both damper and soft pedals. Most damper-pedal changes coincide with harmonic changes, but some of them are related to quick breaths within the phrase. For example, at the turning point of the key change from D^b major to modulation in the second phrase (m. 8), the pedal can be released at the quick breath and taken again for the next harmony (Musical Example 4.74).

Second phrase

shallow and vibrato

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

Musical Example 4.74, “Waldesrauschen”:

Pedals suggestions in the original theme “a” (mm. 5-10)

Due to the soft dynamics in the original theme, it is better to press the damper pedal quite shallowly. Also, the pedal “vibrato” that is recommended by Musica Budapest is useful, especially for the long pedal (Musical Example 4.74). The function of the shallow and frequent change of the pedal is to create a *legato* and *dolcissimo*, while still allowing relatively clean sound. The *una corda* is indicated at the beginning of the piece. But one can release it for the second phrase in order to make contrasting colors for the similar first two phrases. The soft pedal can be taken again for *smorzando ppp* in the last measure of this part.

Section A: variation “a¹” (mm. 15-29)

Melody and bass

The characteristics of “a¹” that differ from the original theme include the reversed position of melody and accompaniment, the melody in the form of octaves instead of a single note, the melody with a slight change of rhythm (e.g., the triplets), the clear bass line rather than the ostinato, and the ending of the theme. The first four changes are merely decorations to the original theme while the last one results in a new phrase structure: 4+6+2+3. The first two phrases (mm. 25-26 and mm. 27-29) remain the same length as those in the original theme, but the next two short phrases now function as a transition to a new key, F major.

Layered dynamics

The whole variation “a¹” grows in volume, yet Liszt did not write a pure *crescendo* for the 15 measures. The following three methods that he used make the music more exciting and powerful. First of all, he placed contrary directions of gradual dynamic change for two hands in measures 22-24 (Musical Example 4.75). The left hand maintains the *crescendo* while the right hand has a *decrescendo* from the quarter note to the eighth notes in each measure. Compared to a pure *crescendo* for both hands, this approach makes the music sound forward-leaning and energetic.

Musical Example 4.75, “Waldesrauschen”:

Unusual dynamic changes in variation “a¹” (mm. 22-25)

The second method is achieved through a sudden but short reduction of volume during the *crescendo* -- *poco calando* in measure 25 (Musical Example 4.75). The abrupt change not only intensifies the drama, but also gives the pianist more room to increase the volume later. The third method of rising dynamics is associated with accelerating the tempo (Musical Example 4.76) or resistance to the important notes (Musical Example 4.77). In Musical Example 4.76, the driving speed for the running notes gives the impression of a fuller sound, which will enhance the loudness.

Musical Example 4.76, “Waldesrauschen”: *Crescendo* with *accelerando* (m. 26)

In Musical Example 4.77, both the melodic F and the bass F are the goal of the transitional phrases. The significance of this note deserves great attention. To give prominence to the note after *più rinforzando*, one can take a big breath during the rest.

Musical Example 4.77, “Waldesrauschen”: *Più rinforzando* with tempo rubato (mm. 28-29)

In addition, more dynamic nuances can be created to reinforce the vigorousness of the music, such as the local *crescendos* and *decrescendos* marked in Musical Examples 4.78.1 and 4.78.2.

Musical Example 4.78.1, “Waldesrauschen”: Dynamic nuance (mm. 19-21)

Musical Example 4.78.2, “Waldesrauschen”: Dynamic nuance (m. 27)

Section A¹: variation “a²” (mm. 29-44)

Melody and bass

This is the only variation that has a periodic phrase structure: 8+8. The first phrase is in F major while the second is transposed to A major with the same melodic structure. Rather than a variation to the original theme, it is more like a part of motivic development. At first, the melody, decorated by appoggiaturas and processing with different intervallic changes, is cut short by a chain of sixteenth running notes in measures 30-31 (Musical Example 4.68.2). Then it is extended and ends differently from the original theme in measures 32-36 (Musical Example 4.68.3). Although there is again no bass line, Liszt added another melody which is derived from the original theme as well (Musical Example 4.68.3).

Tempo rubato

The first melodic F and bass F are not only climactic goal of the previous section, but also the first statement of a tonal center in this section. The F deserves after-resistance and the “robbed” time can be returned during the following sixteenth running notes (m. 29). Another place to apply tempo rubato is similar to the one for the quarter notes in the original theme. This time, instead of after-resistance to the quarter note B^b, one can take

advantage of the time from the appoggiatura note F to B^b as though in slow motion to enjoy the journey (Musical Example 4.79). Meanwhile, the tempo rubato of the melody dominates that of the accompaniment. This tempo rubato helps confirm the tonality again.

Musical Example 4.79, “Waldesrauschen”: “Slow motion” for the grace note (m. 30)

The next tempo rubato was marked by Liszt at the end of the first phrase (m. 36), in which the *poco rallentando* smoothly transports the music from F major to A major. But the reduction of tempo is not appropriate for the end of the second phrase because it will disturb the emotional transition from the end of variation “a²” to the radical variation “a³.” It is probably preferable instead to keep the original tempo and to increase the volume for the last six sixteenth notes.

Pedal

In variation “a¹,” it sounds as if the wind grows strong, making the leaves whirl. But the key change seems to convey that the wind alters its direction, which calms down the forest. To match the tranquil status of forest, Liszt again marks *una corda* for this variation. With respect to the damper pedal, one can consider the generous markings in the Busoni edition. But it may be more practical to use shallow and vibrato pedals. Also, it is worthwhile to try measures 31 and 39 without damper pedal, as the pianist Marc-André Hamelin does in his performance. The dryness of the sound creates sylphlike feeling as if a squirrel quickly scampers up a tree. It is different from the lyrical feeling in

measures 29 and 37, but it keeps the *leggierissimo* quality that Liszt required for this variation.

Section A¹: variation “a³” (mm. 45-60)

Melody and bass

Motivic development is more obvious in this variation. The motif from the first measure of the monotheme grows through invertible counterpoint and chromatic modulation in measures 45-49 (Musical Example 4.68.4). Then the motif continues modulating while the other melodic line stays in the harmony that is based upon a fully diminished seventh chord $F^{\#}/G^b-A-C-E^b$ in the following three measures (Musical Example 4.80). In fact, the chord comes from the third inversion $E^b-F^{\#}-A-C$ in measure 49 and also appears in different descending inversions in measures 53-54 (Musical Example 4.80).

Musical Example 4.80, “Waldesrauschen”:

Fully diminished seventh chord in different inversions and directions (mm. 49-54)

These restless diminished seventh chords and the contrary motion between the hands finally push the music to the first climax (mm. 55-60). During measures 55-57, the bass sustains in an A octave, whereas the harmony changes from F major to F augmented to D major. The three chords appear on the accented quarter note, which sounds like thunder. The sequential basses in octaves seem to be in A major or F[#] minor, but the tonality dramatically returns to the home key D^b major through sliding down a half step from A to A^b in measures 60-61 (Musical Example 4.81). The stormy octave bass line can be played by two hands, similar to Liszt’s directions in “Un sospiro” (p. 153).

The image displays a musical score for 'Waldesrauschen' (mm. 55-62). The score is written for piano (left hand) and violin (right hand). The piano part features a series of chords and arpeggios, with annotations including 'ten.' (tension), 'FM', 'F+', 'DM', 'AM', 'F#m', and 'D#M'. The violin part includes 'martellato' (hammered) markings and 'poco rallent.' (slowing down). The score is marked with 'ff' (fortissimo) and 'f' (forte). The tempo is indicated as 'Un poco più mosso' and 'poco rallent.'.

Musical Example 4.81, “Waldesrauschen”: Harmony and dynamics (mm. 55-62)

Phrasing

Owing to the motivic development with modulation, the music before the climax can be divided into short periodic phrases: 2+2+2+2+2. However, to complete the moment with sufficient energy and momentum, the climax can be viewed as one long phrase (six measures). In this variation, the pulse can still be given one per measure; but hearing one pulse for two measures may be beneficial for creating the effect of *poco a poco più agitato*. Regarding the breath in this variation even in most phrases of the piece, it is preferred to take the breath at the rest on the downbeat instead of the bar line between two measures (e.g., Musical Example 4.80). The reason for this is to keep the music moving through the accompaniment line; meanwhile, it demonstrates the syncopated rhythm in the melody, which is a typical feature of the piece. However, the

longest breath is taken at the double bar line between measures 60-61 in this variation, so as to extend the dramatic time as well as to emphasize the moment of reprise.

Layered dynamics

Liszt sets several dynamic ranges at different points during the big *crescendo* in this variation, such as *sempre crescendo* (m. 49), *ff appassionato* (mm. 51), *fff* (m. 55), and *strepitoso fff* (mm. 58-59). Moreover, the route of the *crescendo* is not straightforward but rather circuitous because he writes four *decrescendos*, in measures 45, 47, 49 and 51, respectively. Furthermore, he draws extra attention to some important notes by adding accents (“>” or “^”) or marking *martellato* above them (Musical Example 4.81). The accented notes are all quarter notes, which embody the characteristic of the syncopation rhythm; the sixteenth notes with *martellato* make the climactic moment sound more vigorous and sonorous. The discussion above is about the layered dynamics on a horizontal plane. From the perspective of vertical layered dynamics, the melody that is based upon the monothematic motif needs to be performed louder than the other melody in the polyphonic texture. There are two reasons for this: (1) Liszt applies *marcato* to this melody (Musical Example 4.82); and (2) it reflects the unity of the theme.

Musical Example 4.82, “Waldesrauschen”: Preferred louder melody in variation “a³” (mm. 45-46)

Tempo rubato

There are three tempo changes marked in the score: *poco a poco più agitato*, *accelerando*, and *poco rallentando*. The first one has a stirring tendency in mood rather than in tempo, so it is not actually necessary to speed up during measures 45-52. The second tempo change is a real increase in the speed. One can fall back in tempo a little bit at the beginning of measure 53 so that it is easy to grow later. During the first climax, each quarter chord in the syncopation is indicated with *tenuto* which requires not only emphasis but also relatively longer time. One should decide which chord with *tenuto* in the three measures 55-57 deserves the longest resistance. Concerning the pulse of each two bars, it is more appropriate to delay the time before playing the chord either in measure 55 or 57. For the same reason, another period of resistance may be taken before the G[#] octave on the downbeat of measure 59. The method to play the third marked tempo change *poco rallentando* is a mirror of the way to play *accelerando*. One can speed up at first in the beginning of measure 59 so as to make a more obvious tempo contrast for the decelerated speed in the end of measure 60. To correspond with the tempo rubato, it is better to apply vibrato pedal for the triplet octaves and single pedals for the last four octaves instead of a long pedal for all of them as indicated in Busoni's edition (Musical Example 4.83).

The image shows a musical score for the piano part of 'Waldesrauschen' (mm. 58-60). The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features several tempo changes: *strepitoso* (marked above the staff), *fff* (marked above the staff), *Speed up* (written in green above the staff), and *poco rallent.* (written in a green box below the staff). The score includes triplet markings (3) and dynamic markings (P, p, fff). Pedal markings (P) are indicated below the staff, with a wavy line representing a long pedal. The *poco rallent.* marking is highlighted with a green box.

Musical Example 4.83, "Waldesrauschen": Tempo rubato and pedals (mm. 58-60)

Section A²: variation “a¹” (mm. 61-70)

This variation is completed in two phrases (4+6). The first phrase is apparently the restatement of the one in variation “a¹,” except that first bass note is written as an octave instead of a single note. The octave figuration hints at the need for more energy and after-resistance for the A^b. The second phrase is reiterated until the sequential modulation, which goes a different direction from the one in the second phrase in variation “a¹” (Musical Example 4.84.1). The rhythm change at the end of the second phrase in variation “a¹” finally brings the music to the second climax. One should notice the accents, *staccatissimo*, and *tenuto* above the notes in the syncopation and possibly expand the time here (Musical Example 4.84.2). Concerning dynamics, both hands can make *più rinforzando* now rather than the contrary dynamic change that Liszt specifically marked in variation “a¹.” Doing this not only foretells the coming of the second climax, but also makes contrast with the sequential modulation in variation “a¹.” As a whole, variation “a¹” starts from *forte* instead of *mezzo forte* and it moves faster (*un poco più mosso*) than variation “a¹.”

Musical Example 4.84.1, “Waldesrauschen”:

Sequential modulation in the second phrase of variation “a¹” (mm. 22-24)

Musical Example 4.84.2, “Waldesrauschen”:

Sequential modulation in the second phrase of variation “a¹” (mm. 68-70)

Section A²: the second climax (mm. 71-87)

Technical issues

Three technical challenges appear in this section. The first eight measures of the right hand in the second climax have an alternative version. Compared to the octave melody in the original version, the melody is harmonized with chords that are as same as those for the left hand in the Ossia passage (Musical Example 4.86). It is hard to tell which technique is easier than the other. Some performers may prefer octaves because it is simpler when shaping the melody. Others, especially pianists with small hands, may select the Ossia to avoid the octaves; the two hands will play the same chords.

Nevertheless, it may difficult to make the voicing in both hands clear. For the left hand, there are two challenges for musical technique: fast tempo and two voices in different dynamics levels. Before practicing, it is important to realize the structure of the bass line: alternation between broken E major and A half diminished seventh chord (mm. 71-75), ascending chromatic scale (mm. 76-77), and then the G[#] pedal tone (m. 78). It may be easier to play this passage fast if both melody and bass lines are already memorized.

Concerning the dynamics, the bass line should be louder than the harmonic line.

The second technical issue is the chord trill by the two hands in measures 79-82. At first, one should lean to the right side since both hands are in the high registers of the keyboard, so that one can have a good position to support the hands. Second, noticing the voiced notes will simplify the difficulty. In the first two measures, the top notes of both hands are to be brought out; these are A-A[#]-B for the right hand and G[#] for the left hand. In the next two measures, the right hand still voices the top notes in an ascending chromatic scale while the left hand sustains the bass pedal tone A^b. Third, make sure that both hands are close to the keyboard, which also facilitates speed. For the seconds in the left hand in measures 79-80, one can approach the keyboard with the hand vertical, due to the awkward position of the two hands (the right hand covers the position of the left hand). Fourth, practice from slow to fast and with different rhythmic patterns for the chord trills.

The third technique—three against two—occurs in measures 83-85. In “La leggierrezza,” I explained a way to solve this rhythmic problem (p. 113-114). In addition to that, two things that can be added here are (1) the fingering of the left hand, and (2) understanding which main notes should be highlighted in this passage. The continuous alternation between the fourth and second fingers from Busoni’s edition may work for the passage, but another possibility of fingering displayed in the Musical Example 4.85 can also worth considering. Although both hands have descending chromatic scales, the simultaneous emphasis of both chromatic notes sounds overly dissonant. It is easier to play the left-hand chromatic notes louder because this hand has fewer notes to manage (Musical Example 4.85).

Musical Example 4.85, “Waldesrauschen”: Fingering and preferred main notes (m. 84)

Tempo rubato

Because Liszt marks *stringendo molto e sempre fortissimo ed appassionato*, the second climax needs to be faster and more intense than the first. Also, it is good to play this part more freely, to accommodate the need for varying moods and techniques. For example, one may suddenly speed up more for measures 79-80, which are marked *quasi trillo*. During the descending melody and bass line (mm. 83-85), one can either slow down or keep the fast tempo in the last bar (m. 85). The two choices will influence the tempo for the next measure. Individual interpretations of the music and differing technical capability create diverse approaches to tempo rubato, which will be discussed more in the next section. It is probably better to take more time on the first fermata in measure 86 than the second one, due to the suspended note F. Enjoy the extended silent time in measure 86—it is the slowest moment in the entire piece.

Phrasing

The division of the phrases can be fluid since the tempo of the second climax is more flexible than the first. Two sorts of divisions will be discussed below. One division is on the same principle of that in the first climax: 2+2+6+7 and one pulse for every two measures. In the first climax, the two-measure short phrases are in a sequence. Similarly, the first two-measure phrases are repeated in the second climax. The goal of the third

phrase is the melodic note A and there is a double line between measures 80 and 81, so it lasts six measures. Then the rest of the measures sound like a cadenza and they can be grouped in one phrase. Taking a breath between each of the first three phrases can save energy in speeding up the tempo. The second breath deserves more time than the first one because the third phrase is much longer than the previous phrases (Musical Example 4.86). After a breath between the third and the fourth phrases, one can start from relatively softer dynamics and a slower tempo in order to have new room to grow. Both accents in measures 79 and 83 should be noted, but it is inadvisable to take too much time on them because they are in the middle of the phrases when they are divided this way.

Ossia *stringendo molto e sempre fortissimo ed appassionato*

stringendo molto e sempre fortissimo ed appassionato

marc.

Rea

sempre fff

quasi trillo

Rea

Longer

resistance

Musical Example 4.86, “Waldesrauschen”: Breathing for two phrase divisions (mm. 71-83)

First phrasing possibility in blue; second possibility in purple

The second approach to division results in three phrases: 4+8+5 and one pulse for each two measures as well. Since the first phrase is longer now, it is suggested to stay in

one tempo, though it is faster than the previous sections. The second phrase lasts eight measures because its destiny is the dominant pedal tone G[#] in C[#] minor (mm. 78-80) and then the enharmonic A^b in D^b major (mm. 81-82). One can gradually speed up to an even more rapid tempo in the second phrase. Then one needs a big breath between the second and the third phrases on the way to the peak of the ascending line. The first note G^b (m. 83) with accent also deserves an after-resistance (Musical Example 4.86).

Layered dynamics

Whether the first four measures of the second climax are divided into two phrases or grouped as one phrase, the up-and-down local dynamics will work better than a pure *crescendo* (Musical Example 4.87). Also, each of these repeated phrases should start more loudly than the previous phrase (Musical Example 4.87).

Musical Example 4.87, “Waldesrauschen”: Layered dynamics (mm. 71-78)

The starting point of the dynamic level in measure 81 is determined by the phrase division. In the first phrase structure, a relatively softer dynamic level can be applied because it is the opening of a new phrase. As a result, measure 80 may have the loudest volume in the second climax. In the second approach to phrase structure, it is better to continue the *crescendo* from the previous measures because measures 81-82 are the last two measures before the loudest peak (m. 83). The end point of the *diminuendo* in the descending line should not be too soft, because the whole Coda needs to be a gradual *decrecendo*. One can perform measure 86 expressively within the dynamic level *mezzo piano*.

Pedal

Based on the harmonic rhythm, it is good to change the pedals once per bar in measures 71-75 and then every beat in measures 76-77; this is slightly different from the suggestions in Busoni's edition. After that, one can follow the pedal markings from Busoni's edition if using the second division of the phrases, in which the pedal tone G[#]/A^b is the destination of the second phrase. One may add a pedal in measure 81 if using the first division of the phrases. During the descending line, it is helpful to maintain the volume if holding the full damper pedal, but it is inappropriate to keep it too long. To maintain clarity, one must apply vibrato and shallow pedal in measures 84-85 and may release the pedal for softer dynamics during the last two beats in measure 85 (Musical Example 4.88). In Busoni's edition or that of Musica Budapest, there is no pedal in measure 86. However, it may be better to have warm sound and sustained harmony, especially with regard to the dominant chord with the pedal (Musical Example 4.88).

Musical Example 4.88, "Waldesrauschen": Pedals (mm. 83-86)

Coda (mm. 87-97)

Similar to the beginning of the piece, the Coda enters in very softly (*pp*) with a mysterious flavor. It also fades out in even softer dynamics (*ppp*), also marked *perdendosi* (dying away).¹⁴² Either slowing down or staying in the original tempo works for the ending. The whole section is presented *decrescendo* and *una corda* as if a calm is restored to the forest as it was in the beginning. The last two tonic rolled chords seem to suggest that the wind has died away.

The main harmonic progression is from V to I in the Coda. Based on the harmony, the theme is altered through shortening (the first phrase mm. 87-89), extension (the second phrase mm. 90-97), and through decoration by appoggiaturas and interval changes (both phrases). Liszt deftly uses thematic transformation to make the ending an echo of the beginning.

¹⁴² Don Michael Randel, ed., "Perdendosi," in *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003): 643.

Gnomesreigen

❖ Description of title

The “Dance of the Gnomes” is the most humorous, cheerful, and mischievous piece among the *Six Concert Etudes*. It has a non-traditional rondo form and two main themes. Theme A describes the image of the gnomes, who are small and impish, through numerous appoggiaturas in *presto* tempo. The *pianissimo* dynamics and *staccato* articulation seem to depict their light-footed and merry pace. Also, the compound duple meter (6/8) is appropriate for dance-like music. Compared to the bouncing and vivacious theme A, theme B sounds more melodic and fluid. However, whether the running notes occur with *non-legato* articulation, even faster tempo, or compound triple meter (9/8), we still feel continues portraying the buoyant dance of the gnomes. Moreover, the contour of the melody in theme B is seemingly to draw circles, lending itself to images of gnomes joining hands and swinging around the floor. Furthermore, chromaticism is intermingled with diatonicism in both themes and the mixed harmony creates a joyous as well as playful effect. For example, the first phrase in theme A combines diatonic chords—dominant seventh chord in F[#] minor and chromatic intervals—minor seconds (Musical Example 4.89.1). In theme B, the first four measures are mainly harmonized by diatonic chords and scales in A major while the next four measures are primarily built upon chromaticism (Musical Example 4.89.2).

Presto scherzando

Minor seconds

Dominant chord in F# minor

pp *più dimin.*

Musical Example 4.89.1, “Gnomenreigen”:

Combined diatonicism and chromaticism in theme A (mm. 1-4)

Un poco più animato

Diatonic scale

Diatonic chords

Chromatic scale

Chromatic linear harmony

p giocoso non legato

Musical Example 4.89.2, “Gnomenreigen”:

Combined diatonicism and chromaticism in theme B (mm. 21-28)

In order to depict the character of gnomes well, one may conjure up the endearing images of the seven dwarfs in the German fairy tale *Snow White* or the shrewd personality of Puck in William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A good performance of program music is established on picturesque imagination, careful analysis of different musical elements, and a balanced combination of the two.

❖ Structure

Unlike traditional rondo form, what we see in “Gnomensreigen” is truncated by a short section in the middle of the piece: ABAB¹CA¹B²Coda (Table 4.8). The main theme A stays in the key of F[#] minor and keeps its original melody when it recurs every time. Although section A¹ is a variation which cuts the opening phrase, changes the ending, and alters many musical elements, such as accompaniment, register, texture, and technique, the main theme can still be clearly identified (Musical Example 4.90).

Musical Example 4.90.1, “Gnomensreigen”: Simplified melody in section A (mm. 5-20)

Musical Example 4.90.2, “Gnomesreigen”: Simplified melody in section A¹ (mm. 103-120)

Another important B theme also appears three times (as does theme A) and it changes tonality every time. Section B is in A major, the relative major key to the F[#]-minor home tonality. B¹ almost copies the content of B in B^b major, which is a remote key to the tonality of theme A; however, it extends the last measure (Musical Example 4.91).

Musical Example 4.91.1, “Gnomesreigen”: Ending of section B (mm. 33-37)

Musical Example 4.91.2, “Gnomesreigen”: Extended ending of section B¹ (mm. 69-76)

By contrast, B² is in the parallel major key of theme A—F[#] major and it enlarges itself through the climax (mm. 133-143). Section C is in the relative minor key (G minor) of section B¹. It is not a self-created passage, in that measures 77-84 are based upon the motif of the main theme A (Musical Example 4.92) and measures 85-102 are composed of repeated notes in the left hand and “funny” harmonies like tritones and augmented chords in the right hand. The combination of repeated notes and comical harmony also inspires the first half of the Coda. Then the second half of the Coda reveals the fluctuation of two arpeggios, D augmented and F[#] major. At last, the F[#]-major arpeggio “wins the game” and ends the piece quietly.

Musical Example 4.92, “Gnomenreigen”:

Material derived from theme A, in section C (mm. 77-84)

Since this rondo form is unusual, some scholars analyze the structure of the etude in different ways. For example, a Chinese scholar Huijie Sun calls it varietal rondo form (Table 4.9). He views measures 72-76 as a bridge and describes mm. 77-120 as a new section; he also divides measures 121-143 into two parts and describes the latter part (mm. 133-143) as another bridge.¹⁴³ It is reasonable to name the two parts “bridge” because they do not truly form a theme. However, it seems inappropriate to ignore the recurrence of theme A after the first bridge.

According to Table 4.8, the whole piece is in a soft dynamic range, except for section B², which contains the climax, with bursts of loud dynamics. A¹ seems very

¹⁴³ Huijie Sun, “李斯特音乐会练习曲侏儒舞探析” [Exploring Liszt’s Concert Etude Gnomenreigen], 大众文艺23 (2012): 11-12.

dramatic (range from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*), as does the ending of B² to the beginning of the Coda (ranging from *fortissimo* to *pianissimo*).

Section	A	B	A	B	C	A ¹	B ² (climax included)	Coda
Key	f [#]	A	f [#]	B ^b	g	f [#]	F [#]	F [#]
Measure	1-20	21-37	37-56	57-76	77-102	102-120	121-143	143-168
Dynamics	<i>pp</i>	<i>p</i> < > <i>p</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>p</i> < > <i>p</i>	<i>pp</i> ~~~~~	<i>pp</i>	<i>ff</i>	<i>p</i> > <i>ppp</i>

Table 4.8, “Gnomesreigen”: Structure

Section	A	B	A	B'	Bridge	C	B''	Bridge	Coda
Measure	1-20	21-35	36-56	57-71	72-76	77-120	121-132	133-143	144-168

Table 4.9, “Gnomesreigen”: Structure in Huijie Sun’s analysis¹⁴⁴

The image shows a musical score for 'Gnomesreigen'. The top staff is for piano (p) and the bottom staff is for violin (v). The tempo/mood is marked 'Un poco più animato'. The piano part has a dynamic marking of *p* and the instruction 'giocoso non legato'. The violin part has a dynamic marking of *p*. There are several pink annotations: a bracket above the piano staff from measure 21 to 23, and a bracket below the violin staff from measure 21 to 23. There are also pink arrows pointing from the piano staff to the violin staff at measures 21, 23, and 25.

Musical Example 4.93, “Gnomesreigen”: Local dynamic changes within the main dynamic range (*p*) (mm. 21-23)

¹⁴⁴ Huijie Sun, 11.

The end of the etude ascends from a very low to a very high register, in the form of arpeggio. It is the softest place of the whole piece, not only because of the *ppp*, but also due to the quarter rest with fermata. Since the main dynamic levels are within *piano* or *pianissimo*, one needs to make more dynamic nuances to create acoustic layers. It is as if the color spectrum we call “green” can be divided into grass green, olive green, jade green, cyan, peacock green, grey green, and so on. A painting of a leaf will have layer effects if the painter uses different greens. For instance, in theme B, thanks to the circle-like melody, a local dynamic change can also be made as a flexible rubber band within the main dynamic range *piano* so as to enhance the whirling feeling of the dance (Musical Example 4.93). Additionally, there are two dynamic accent signs in the etude: “>” and “^” (e.g., Musical Example 4.94). According to the Harvard Dictionary of Music, the second one calls for greater loudness and sharper attack than the first one.¹⁴⁵

Musical Example 4.94, “Gnomenreigen”: Two dynamic accent signs (mm. 17-20)

❖ Main technical issues

“Gnomenreigen” can serve as an alternative to “Un sospiro” when an advanced piano student wants to start learning Liszt’s concert etudes. From the view of mechanical techniques, it trains skills like *staccatissimo*, appoggiatura, repeated notes, chromatic

¹⁴⁵ The Harvard Dictionary of Music, 4th ed., s.v. “accent.”

scales, diatonic scales and arpeggios in *presto* tempo. As far as the musical technique is concerned, learning flexible and quick dynamic changes as well as dance rhythms in 6/8 or 9/8 can help students promote their interpretation of program music and their performance style of romantic music. Throughout the piece, two techniques are worth discussing: the short appoggiatura in theme A and the whirlpool-like arpeggio in theme B.

There are two approaches to playing the short appoggiaturas: performing the grace note on the beat or before the beat. The former approach leads to an accented appoggiatura while the latter results in an unaccented appoggiatura. It may be preferred to hear the main note on the beat because of the harmonic progression V₇-I in the opening of the piece, but it may also cause confusion regarding the accented notes in the later phrases of theme A. In measures 13-20, Liszt specifically marks accents for the first note of the two thirty-second notes. Although the sound effect of the note value of the thirty-second notes is the same as that of the appoggiaturas in *presto* tempo, pianists still need to decide which note should be accented for the appoggiaturas and to be consistent with this decision throughout section A. For practicing the technical aspects, one can try rhythmic patterns in groups of two: long-short and short-long at a very slow tempo to feel the accents on different notes. Once the decision is made about which notes to accent, it is useful sometimes to practice playing only the accented notes, those that convey the melody. Musical Example 4.90.1 shows just the melodic notes in theme A. Also practice gradually increasing the tempo from slow to fast tempo, first just the melodic notes and then all the notes as written. The fastest speed for this piece can be around ♩=104-116.

Since theme B includes many basic pianistic skills, it is helpful to have practiced many different diatonic scales, diatonic arpeggios (e.g., A major, B^b major, and F[#] major), and chromatic scales before playing the piece. The main figuration, the whirling arpeggio in theme B, is associated with six points regarding performance practice: the fingering, the flexible alternation of thumb and the second finger, the rotation of wrist, the choice of the melodic notes, the destination notes, and the articulation. The main fingering of this specific arpeggio is 1-2-5-2-1-2. But when this figure is connected with chromatic scales, one may try different fingerings to find the most comfortable one (e.g., Musical Example 4.95).

Musical Example 4.95, “Gnomenreigen”: Fingerings (m. 64)

To improve the flexibility between fingers one and two, one can practice a diatonic scale like A major by using only these two fingers (Musical Example 4.96). Also, it is essential to work on all the notes as original written, using different rhythmic patterns.

Musical Example 4.96, “Gnomenreigen”:

Two ways of fingering to practice the A-major scale by using thumb and index finger only

As for the second point, the rotation of the wrist from the bottom up for each six-note makes this much easier on the hand. This arc of the wrist is described in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4, “Gnomensreigen”: Arc of the right wrist (mm. 21-22)

As for the third point, there are two choices for the melody line: (1) all the notes for the right hand; (2) the notes only with both stems (up and down) on the right hand (Musical Examples 4.97.1 and 4.97.2). Both choices are linked with destination notes. In other words, performers need to know clearly where the melody goes, which helps the music move forward as well as leading the dynamic changes. For example, in Musical Example 4.93, the music will sound more rhythmic and whirling if one pays attention to the first note of each six-note figuration. It will make the music more expressive with layered dynamics if one views the B (m. 22) and C[#] (m. 23) as destination notes. Lastly, theme B should be played with *non-legato* articulation, which may help to display the playful nature of the gnomes. Practicing the *staccato* with a scratching motion of the finger may help for this articulation. One may also try to practice with *legato* articulation in order to feel the musical connection more clearly. In addition, using the pedal should be both rare and shallow.

Musical Example 4.97.1, “Gnomenreigen”: First choice of melody line (mm. 21-22)

Musical Example 4.97.2, “Gnomenreigen”: Second choice of melody line (mm. 21-22)

❖ Sectional analysis

Section A (mm. 1-20 and 37-56)

Phrasing

The light and bouncing section A has four phrases: 4+4+4+8. The first phrase has an introductory quality. The second and third phrases are identical to each other. The fourth phrase is the longest and it can be divided into sub-phrases: 2+2+4, according to the emphasized notes A-B-C[#]. Except for the first phrase, all phrases start on an anacrusis eighth note. For example, the second phrase is from the last C[#] in measure 4 to the appoggiatura G[#]-C[#] in measure 8. A division like this influences one’s choice of places to breathe (e.g., Musical Example 4.98). Feeling one pulse per two bars can help the *staccato* notes flow forward in *presto* tempo.

Musical Example 4.98, “Gnomes”: Breathing (mm. 1-8)

Layered dynamics

Regarding the main dynamics, the first three phrases are within *pianissimo* while the last one is marked *crescendo*. Since the two middle phrases are completely the same, one can play the second one (mm. 8-12) *pianissimo* with *una corda* in the first section A and the next instance *piano* (mm. 44-48) without soft pedal in the second section A, in order to make contrast not only between the two local phrases, but also between the two larger sections. Within each phrase, the expression from the local dynamics is also important. For instance, the last phrase can be performed as described in Musical Example 4.99 so that a layered *crescendo* can be clearly heard.

Musical Example 4.99, “Gnomesreigen”:

Layered *crescendo* in the last phrase in section A (mm. 13-20)

Tempo rubato

Tempo rubato can be another emotional tool to make the two A sections different. Liszt already prescribes one contrast for the beginning phrase. In the second A section, he adds *poco rallentando* and a fermata in the end of the opening phrase (Musical Example 4.100).

Musical Example 4.100, “Gnomesreigen”:

Tempo rubato in the end of the opening phrase in the second section A (mm. 39-42)

For the opening phrase, one can start a bit slowly and gradually bring the music to *presto* tempo in the first section A; for contrast, one may keep the *presto* tempo for the same place in the second section A. Another tempo rubato – *ritardando* can be made at the end

of the last phrase in either or both A sections; this is useful partly so that one can relax the hands in order to prepare for the next section, which has an even more vigorous tempo (*Un poco più animato*).

Pedal

The pedal markings in Busoni's edition coincide with the harmonic progressions. The editing provides clear signs for when to place the pedal, but it does not indicate when to release the pedal or how deep the pedal should be. Since Liszt required *staccato e leggiero* from the second phrase for the section, I would suggest using quarter pedals, each lasting one eighth note. The soft pedal can be an effective way change the color in this piece. In addition to the example listed in the "Layered dynamics" section above, one may also add *una corda* for the opening phrase in order to decrease the loudness that accumulates from the long damper pedals.

Section B and B¹ (mm. 21-37 and 57-76)

Melody and bass

The two choices of melodic line in theme B have already been discussed in the "Main technical issues" (p. 213-214). Before the theme ends, it changes meter from 9/8 to 2/4 for the descending chromatic scale. Liszt marked *velocissimo* for the passage, which essentially means that one should play it as quickly as possible. In the Musica Budapest edition, the editor adds [♩=♩] for the transitional note values, which can be considered as well. The bass line in the theme either stays on one pitch or is moves chromatically. In addition to the bass, it is also important to hear the harmony, which will enhance the audience's sense of the music's comedy.

Phrasing

The phrases in this theme are mostly short, compared to theme A. Both B sections have six phrases, but the last phrase has a different length. The irregular structure in section B is 2+2+2+2+5+4 whereas section B¹ is 2+2+2+2+5+8. Be careful of the ending note of the fifth phrase, which is the first note of the measure in 2/4 time. Also, the last phrase in section B sustains until the C[#] in measure 37. Both breaths should be taken after these notes. The pulse in theme B is one for each measure in 9/8 time and one for the whole passage in 2/4 time. Having only one pulse for the descending chromatic scale creates a feeling like something suddenly rolling down a slope. One may imagine that the fruits that the seven dwarfs picked are rolling down the hill. In section B¹, there are five measures in 6/8 time after the rolling-down passage, and one pulse for two measures may work there, except in the first measure (Musical Example 4.101).

Musical Example 4.101, “Gnomeneigen”: Pulse (mm. 72-76)

Layered melody

The main dynamic changes in section B include a big *crescendo* until the 2/4 and then a *diminuendo* to the end. The long *crescendo* can be divided into two layers: one level within each phrase and the other level within each motif, as shown in Musical Example 4.93 above.

Pedal

As in section A, it is not advisable to apply too much length or depth to the damper pedals in sections B, especially for the chords that have *staccatissimo* articulation and chromatic passages. For instance, Musical Example 4.102 displays different suggestions for the pedal from Busoni's edition.

Un poco più animato

Busoni.: Ped. x P Ped. P x P x

Mine: P x P x P x

Musical Example 4.102, “Gnomesreigen”: Pedals (mm. 21-22)

For the *velocissimo* passage, there are many ways to use the pedal to create diverse sound effects. Busoni's pedaling in Musical Example 4.103 should be performed shallowly; its sound effect is continuous and loud, but a little obscure. The second way makes the peak chord with *sforzando* and *staccatissimo* clear, but the descending chromatic scale may sound dry. The third method is to change the pedal frequently, keeping each *staccato* note obvious and the chromatic scale clear. The choice of pedaling can vary based on the individual performer's taste; it is also dependent on the resonance of the performance hall.

Busoni: *rinforzando velocissimo*

2nd way: P x

3rd way: P

Musical Example 4.103, “Gnomes”:

Different ways to pedal in the *velocissimo* passage (mm. 69-71)

Section C (mm. 77-102)

Technical issues

The fast repeated notes marked *staccatissimo* are the main technical issue and also a highlight of this section. The low dominant note D in G minor sustains as a pedal tone, though it fluctuates until the end of the section. In order to have clear and bouncing repeated notes in rapid tempo, five things need to be noticed: First, the repeated notes are in triplet rhythm here. Typically, the 3-2-1 fingering works well. Secondly, it is easier to use a rounded fingertip rather than flat fingers or wrist for repeated notes in rapid tempo. As for the articulation, this approach makes the note value short by means of scratching the key. Concerning the tempo, in general the closer one stays to the key, the faster one can alternate the fingers will be. Last but not the least, be patient enough to practice this technique at a slow tempo. Great haste does not always result in good speed.

Layered dynamics

Liszt does not write any dynamic signs other than *pianissimo* in this section, which means that pianists have more room to make dynamic changes around or within *pianissimo*. Among the four phrases (4+4+9+9) with one pulse each two measures in

section C, the first two are the same, which means that the second one could be played *molto pianissimo* with *una corda*. The third phrase can have a *crescendo* because these augmented chords are in the ascending chromatic scale. However, be prepared to come back to *pianissimo* quickly for the last chord in measure 93 (Musical Example 4.104).

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system contains five measures, and the second system contains four measures. The right hand (treble clef) plays a series of augmented chords in an ascending chromatic scale. The first two measures of the first system have a *pp* dynamic, and the last measure of the first system has an *mp* dynamic. The right hand of the second system ends with a *pp* dynamic. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady eighth-note bass line throughout. Red boxes highlight the augmented chords in the right hand, and pink lines connect the dynamics across the systems.

Musical Example 4.104, “Gnomesreigen”:

Melody and dynamics in the third phrase of section C (mm. 85-93)

In the fourth phrase, the pedal tone D no longer stays in place; rather, it becomes an up-and-down bass line. In contrast, the right hand is based on one fully diminished seventh chord which moves through different inversions in ascending direction. One may apply a *crescendo* until the right hand finishes. Then the direction of the bass line can lead the dynamic changes. Liszt marked *pedal ad libitum* from measure 97, which means that pedals can be added “at the pleasure of the performer.”¹⁴⁶ In my opinion, a fairly short and shallow pedal for each triplet may work for achieving a dry sound and the feeling of being ready to make trouble (Musical Example 4.105).

¹⁴⁶ *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. “ad libitum.”

Musical Example 4.105, “Gnomes”:

Dynamics and pedals in the fourth phrase of section C (mm. 94-102)

Section A¹ (mm. 102-120)

Technical issues

Section A¹ includes four phrases (4+4+4+6). The ascending chromatic chords in the last phrase (mm. 175-120) are present issues for fingering, voicing, and rhythm. The choices of fingering are based upon personal preference. The advice concerning the fingering of the chords on the right hand and the intervals on the left hand can be taken as reference (Musical Example 4.106). Some pianists who prefer the unchanged fingering as indicated in Busoni’s edition (m. 119) need to put more effort into the relaxation of the arm and wrist.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a single bass clef line below. The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The first system shows a melodic line in the right hand with green fingering numbers (1-5) above the notes. The second system continues the piece, with green fingering numbers (1-5) both above and below the notes. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth notes and triplets, and dynamic markings like 'f' and 'p'.

Musical Example 4.106, “Gnomensreigen”:

Fingering in the last phrase of section A¹ (mm. 115-120)

In terms of the voicing, the outer octaves of the right hand are the most important melodic notes in this phrase. Liszt does not mark any indications for speeding up in this driving phrase. Instead, he used a diminished rhythm, as the duple-meter eighth-note triplets (mm. 115-116) are temporarily replaced by triple-meter eighth-note pairs (mm. 117-118), conveying an urgent feeling. The strong beats of these rhythms should be emphasized.

Layered dynamics

Similar to the previous section, the first two phrases are the same except for appearing in different registers. It is expected that we should hear the second one in a dynamic level other than *pianissimo*. The third phrase can start from *pianissimo* again and gradually increase the volume until reaching *fortissimo* at the end of the fourth phrase. Although Liszt did not write *fortissimo* at the end of section A¹, he gave us a hint of the dramatic dynamic change by the mark at the beginning of the next section. With regard to local dynamic changes, the abrupt *crescendo* and *decrescendo* for the rising melody in the first phrase creates a teasing moment (Musical Example 4.107).

Musical Example 4.107, “Gnomenreigen”:

Local dynamic changes in the first phrase of section A¹ (mm. 102-103)

Another dynamic nuance takes place during the *crescendo* in the third phrase (Musical Example 4.108).

Musical Example 4.108, “Gnomenreigen”:

Local dynamic changes in the third phrase of section A¹ (mm. 110-114)

Also, one should carefully handle the chromatic notes without conflicting with the pulse (one for each two bars) in the last two phrases.

Pedal

The pedal markings of this section in Busoni's edition are quite compatible with the chord changes and dynamic changes. To make the section more dramatic, one can add the soft pedal in the first two phrases so as to save more room for the *crescendo* in the next two phrases. Moreover, the pedals in the last phrase of Busoni's edition help one to increase the volume in preparation for the *fortissimo* in the next section. However, this approach may compromise the clarity of the chromatic chords. By contrast, the second way provided in Musical Example 4.109 enhances the purity of the chords, but it may not be powerful enough for the peak moment. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages and one can adjust the pedals according to how much hand pedaling he or she can do and according to the resonance of the particular performance hall.

Busoni.

2nd way: P P P P P P P P P P P P

Musical Example 4.109, "Gnomens Reigen":

Two ways to use damper pedals in the last phrase of section A¹ (mm. 115-120)

Section B² (mm. 121-143)

Phrasing

This section includes the climax moment. In mm. 121-132, before the moment, we see a regular phrase structure: 2+2+2+2+2+2; during the moment (mm. 133- 143), there are three phrases: 2+2+7. Since the last long phrase contains a meter change, the one pulse per measure in 9/8 time may change to be one pulse each two measures in 6/8 time. Because this is the only section that starts with *fortissimo*, it deserves a big breath prior to the opening phrase.

Layered dynamics

It is not easy to play *fortissimo* or even louder (*il pi ùff* from m. 133) all the time in *presto* tempo in this section. In addition to the whirling local dynamic changes suggested in the previous theme B, performers can also lower the volume for the repeated measures or phrases, such as measures 123-124 (the second phrase), 130, and 135-136. Furthermore, it is feasible to perform the descending F[#] major scale with *decrescendo* and then rally for the final sprint with *crescendo*, for the scale in contrary motion between two hands and the last *staccatissimo* octaves. Apart from the horizontal layered dynamics, the vertical layered dynamics are found in two places: the waltz-like accompaniment and the polyphonic melodies. Compared to the accompaniment part in section B and B¹, Liszt added low bass notes on the downbeat instead of only repeated chords in section B², which enhances the dancing effect (Musical Example 4.110). As a result, the low bass notes are as significant as the melody while the repeated chords should be played more softly.

Musical Example 4.110, “Gnomes”: Waltz dance rhythm (mm. 123-127)

Polyphony appears in the climax part, particularly in the descending F[#] major scale within sixths between two hands. Another place that cannot be neglected is the arpeggio-like melody marked with *marcato* for the left hand in measures 134 and 136. The *staccatissimo* left-hand melody may be played more loudly and more expressive than the *non-legato* melody in the right hand (Musical Example 4.111).

Musical Example 4.111, “Gnomes”: Dynamics in polyphony (m. 134)

Tempo rubato

In addition to a louder sound, Liszt also indicates a faster tempo (*vivacissimo*) for the first half of section B² and still more rapid speed (*il più presto*) for the climax moment. During the climax, the first three phrases begin with the same melody and

accompaniment. The third one, marked *rinforzando molto*, can be highlighted by means of accents on the first notes of both hands as well as by the after-resistance of these notes. The emphasis and tempo rubato here also give performers mental preparation for the following cadenza-like F[#] major scale.

Pedal

Before the descending diatonic scale, the pedal suggestions in Busoni's edition and Musica Budapest Edition are the same. As indicated in the latter edition, "the change of pedal after each group of six quavers serves to accentuate the metrical contrast between melody and harmony."¹⁴⁷ This procedure works for most phrases, but two measures (m. 125 and 127) can be altered as shown in Musical Example 4.110, so as to demonstrate the chromaticism. For the cadenza-like scale part, Busoni's edition suggests a long pedal from measure 137 to the first octaves of measure 142, whereas Musica Budapest Edition advises vibrato half pedals for the descending line and another pedal for measures 141-142.1.¹⁴⁸ The former edition increases the loudness of the climax moment while the latter enables clearer sound. In my opinion, since the descending lines in both hands flow at the harmonic interval of a sixth, one pedal for each group of six eighth notes will make the accented notes prominent. When the two hands are in contrary motion, the intervals between the two lines are sometimes inharmonic. Thus, using vibrato pedals in measure 141 brings benefit for clear pitches. After the *staccatissimo* octaves without pedal in measure 142, a short pedal for the *sforzando* octave F[#] in

¹⁴⁷ Franz Liszt, *Studies II*, vol. 2 of *Works for Piano Solo*, ed. Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szélenyi (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1971), 63.

¹⁴⁸ Franz Liszt, *Studies II*, vol. 2 of *Works for Piano Solo*, ed. Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szélenyi (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1971), 63-64.

measure 143 can help to argument the sonorousness at the peak moment (Musical Example 4.112).

Musical Example 4.112, “Gnomes”: Pedal suggestions (mm. 137-144)

Coda (mm. 143-168)

Phrasing

The pulse stays in one for two measures and it perfectly dominates the rhythm of section (Musical Example 4.113). However, this also makes the phrase division difficult. To satisfy both concerns, this section may have two long phrases: measures 143-156 and 156-168.

Musical Example 4.113, “Gnomes”: Pulse in the Coda (mm. 143-147)

Layered dynamics

Be aware of the dramatic dynamic change before the octaves F[#] and the single repeated notes F[#] before the Coda begins. The range of the *decrescendo* is probably from *fff* to *p* and the change is significant in transforming the mood. If section B² sounds like a grand and exciting dance party of gnomes, the Coda seems to describe their walking back home with buoyant steps, humming at the same time. The decrease of the volume from *p* to *ppp* in the Coda is as if they gradually disappear. The first phrase is horizontally marked *piano*, *sempre più piano*, and *ppp* in different places. The soft pedal can be added when the triple *piano* occurs (m. 155). Vertically, the two hands can display layered dynamics at different times (Musical Example 4.114).

Musical Example 4.114, “Gnomenreigen”:

Dynamic changes between the hands in the first phrase of the Coda (mm. 143-156)

The second phrase is within *pianissimo* most of the time except the last ascending F[#] major arpeggio, marked *ppp*. Liszt’s purpose for adding damper pedal in this phrase might be to give more emphasis on the tonic pedal tone. The Musica Budapest Edition even indicates a damper pedal until the end of the piece (*sin’al Fine del pezzo*) for

measures 165-168. In order to make the last *ppp* quiet enough, one may apply a final *crescendo-decrescendo* pair during the *legato* passage (Musical Example 4.115). Also, it is suggested that the soft pedal be used for the whole phrase. The gnomes disappear into the forest when the last three chords are finished, but the music remains in the mind and the happy mood is kept in the air, in the rest and the fermata.

Musical Example 4.115, “Gnomesreigen”: Final *crescendo* and *decrescendo* (mm. 163-168)

CONCLUSION

Liszt's *Six Concert Etudes* provide advanced piano students with the opportunity to learn pianistic techniques of high difficulty and musical expression through different methods like phrasing, layered dynamics, and tempo rubato. Also, study and performance of these pieces can help us to understand Liszt's compositional style, including innovative forms based upon thematic transformation, cyclic references between beginnings and endings, changeable tonality in third relationship or to remote keys, and a harmonic system related to chromatic, octatonic, whole-tone, and pentatonic scales. Furthermore, the *Six Concert Etudes* bring pianists to a deep level of interpreting the scores, for example the link between a programmatic title and a particular technique. Far more than didactic drills, these beautiful concert etudes may be a good place to start learning to analyze carefully and to interpret by oneself.

Liszt has particular technical skills in mind for each etude. In other words, each technique serves the different emotions, sonorities, picturesque descriptions, or sound colors. For example, the ostinato accompaniment in the right hand of "Waldesrauschen" depicts the leaves rustled by wind, while the transparent technique in "La leggierrezza" represents the sense of lightness and swiftness. Unlike Czerny's or Chopin's etudes that focus primarily on one single skill, the synthesized techniques in the *Six Concert Etudes* increase the degree of difficulty. Comparing the difficulty levels among the six etudes, "Gnomenreigen" and "Un sospiro" may be good starting pieces, because both of them are established on basic pianistic techniques, such as diatonic scales, chromatic scales, repeated notes, and arpeggios. The appoggiatura ("Gnomenreigen") and the three-hand

effect (“Un sospiro”) are unique techniques in these two pieces, but they are not hard to handle in comparison with the skills required in other etudes. “Waldesrauschen” mainly concentrates on two technical issues—ostinato accompaniment and *legato* octaves. However, the complicated and sensitive dynamic changes increase the difficulty of the musical technique. Although “Ab irato” is rarely performed on stage and its length is relatively short, most techniques like crossed hands and octave chords with *staccatissimo* in *presto* tempo and *forte* or *fortissimo* dynamic range are not easily mastered. The most difficult etudes are probably “Il lamento” and “La leggierrezza.” The former is the longest etude and contains profound musical depth. Apart from the opening cadenza and successive big jumps between two voices, it does not have too many mechanical technical problems. Nonetheless, it requires time to work out the voicing, polyphonic texture, and divergent tempo rubato, on the basis of understanding its structure, thematic transformation, and programmatic meaning. “La leggierrezza,” as one of the most performed concert pieces, has many challenges regarding finger dexterity, irregular rhythmic division, rapid tempo, and chromatic thirds and sixths. These concert pieces belong to the genre of etude, but they go far beyond mere technical exercises.

As far as the musical expression is concerned, the *Six Concert Etudes* reflect the active influences of program music. Although most of the titles of these pieces were not supplied by Liszt, they bear a close relationship with the motives, textures, articulations, techniques, melodic shapes, harmonic language, dynamic and tempo designs. “Ab irato” describes an angry mood through the *staccatissimo* articulation, rotating melodic contour, and the jumps between high and low registers. Similarly, the pieces in *Trois Études de concert* also represent one emotion or state. “Il lamento” and “Un sospiro” are primarily

characterized by sad moods while “La leggierrezza” seems to be about floating or flying. All of them are based on an original motif which plays an important role in different themes throughout the piece. Moreover, the texture ranges from sparse to dense, the dynamic changes from *pp dolce* to *fff appassionato*, the tempo rubato from *più lento* to *più agitato*, and all work together for emotional release or wispy mood changes. Both etudes in *Zwei Konzertetüden* delineate a scene, one of Nature and the other of human residents at play. The nuance of dynamic changes is the most important musical expression in the two pieces. In addition to this, the multiple modulations in “Waldesrauschen” could refer to changeable wind directions, while the appoggiaturas and augmented chords portray in a lively way the image of the mischievous gnomes. Some program music may potentially limit the performer’s imagination. By contrast, the titles of these pieces provide performers with a shortcut for understanding the music; they also provide an expressive connection among many musical elements. Studying Liszt’s *Six Concert Etudes* will help pianists enhance their ability to express the musical intensity of romantic music.

In conclusion, playing the *Six Concert Etudes* or any other pieces is much more than practicing mechanical techniques or bringing two hands together for advanced piano students. An artistic work will have soul because of the performers’ re-creation, the personal interpretation of the original score, which needs to be built upon carefully planned practice enlivened by ideas, imagination, and musicality.

The following five pedagogical thoughts may worth considering: First, it is very important to understand the architecture of a piece, including the tonal structure, thematic structure, and dynamic structure. Before practicing the details of a piece, it is better to

practice only the melody and bass lines, gaining a clear overview from the beginning. Second, it is meaningless to practice techniques with only mechanical hand motions. Technique will transform into music when pianists give it musical pulse, breathing, dynamics, and tempo rubato. Third, some musical elements, such as a specific note figuration (e.g., the sigh motif in “Il lamento”) or harmony (e.g., the augmented-sixth chord in “La leggierrezza”) have functions like symbolization, key change, or mood alteration. They deserve attention and emphasis in performance. Fourth, it is worthwhile to compare differences or to create differences between two similar phrases or sections, even if the difference is only a slight change. Fifth, there may be many ways to perform any passage from time to time. Whether the methods come from different score editions, performances, or master classes, one should try each approach and then find the most comfortable way for himself or herself. It is essential to practice diligently every day, but it is wiser to practice with mind and spirit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arnold, Ben, ed. *The Liszt Companion*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.
- Bass, Richard. "Liszt's *Un sospiro*: An Experiment in Symmetrical Octave-Partitions." *Journal of the American Liszt Society* 32 (July 1992): 16-37.
- Göllerich, August. *The Piano Master Classes of Franz Liszt, 1884-1886: Diary Notes of August Gollerich*. Edited by Wilhelm Jerger. Translated by Richard Louis Zimdars. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Gordon, Stewart. *A History of Keyboard Literature: Music for the Piano and Its Forerunners*. Belmont, CA: Schirmer, Cengage Learning, 1996.
- Hamilton, Kenneth, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Liszt, Franz. *Selected Letters*. Ed. and trans. Adrian Williams. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Mcintosh, Wilson Legare, Jr. "A Study of the Technical and Stylistic Innovations of Franz Liszt as Demonstrated in an Analysis of Selected Etudes." DMA diss., Columbia University Teachers College, 1983.
- Morin, Rachel Beatrice. "Progressive and Traditional Elements in the Trois Études De Concert by Franz Liszt." DMA diss., University of Iowa, 2008.
- Ott, Bertrand. *Lisztian Keyboard Energy: An Essay on the Pianism of Franz Liszt*. Translated by Donald H. Windham. Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen, 1992.
- Randel, Don Michael, ed. "Accent." In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.
- _____. "Ad libitum." In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.
- _____. "Etude." In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.
- _____. "Rallendando." In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.
- _____. "Ritardando." In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.

- _____. "Ritenuato." In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.
- _____. "Rubato." In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.
- _____. "Transformation of Themes." In *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Rosen, Charles. *Piano Notes: The World of the Pianist*. New York: Free Press, 2002.
- Shafer, Timothy. "Color and Gesture in the Piano Music of Franz Liszt." In *The Pianist's Craft: Mastering the Works of Great Composers*, edited by Richard Paul Anderson, 106-17. Plymouth, UK: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012.
- Sitwell, Sacheverell. *Liszt*. Rev.ed. London: Cassell, 1955.
- Sun, Huijie. "李斯特音乐会练习曲侏儒舞探析" [Exploring Liszt's Concert Etude Gnomenreigen]. *大众文艺* 23 (2012): 11-12.
- Walker, Alan. "Liszt." In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2nd ed. Edited by Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 2001, vol. 14.
- Walker, Alan. "Liszt Societies." In *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2nd ed. Edited by Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 2001, vol. 14.
- _____. *Franz Liszt*. 3 vols. New York: Knopf, 1983.
- Watson, Derek. *Liszt*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Xu, Bing. "肖邦练习曲与李斯特练习曲对比浅析" [Comparison between Liszt's and Chopin's Etudes]. *音乐探索* S1 (2007): 35-36.
- Yang, Ching-Ling. "The Development of the Piano Etude from Muzio Clementi to Anton Rubinstein: A Study of Selected Works from 1801 to 1870." DMA diss., The University of North Carolina, 1998.

Musical Scores

Liszt, Franz. *Complete Etudes for Solo Piano Series I and II*. Edited by Ferruccio Busoni. 2 vols. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel. 1910-11.

Liszt, Franz. *Complete Etudes for Solo Piano Series I and II*. Edited by Ferruccio Busoni. 3 vols. New York: Dover Publications Inc. 1988.

Liszt, Franz. *Studies II*. Vol. 2 of *Works for Piano Solo*. Edited by Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szélenyi. Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1971.

Liszt, Franz. *Etudes*. Vol. 4 of *Franz Liszt: Klavierwerke*. Edited by Emil von Sauer. Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1917.

Liszt, Franz. *Liszt: An Album for Piano Solo*. Melville, NY: Belwin Mills, 1970.