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Research Paper For A Master's Recital Of Piano: Beethoven's Piano Sonata, Op. 109, Debussy's L'Isle Joyeuse, L. 106, Rachmaninoff's Etude-Tableaux, Op. 39, No. 5, And Chopin's Second Piano Sonata, Op. 35

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RESEARCH PAPER FOR A MASTER'S RECITAL OF PIANO: BEETHOVEN'S PIANO SONATA, OP. 109, DEBUSSY'S L'ISLE JOYEUSE, L. 106, RACHMANINOFF'S ETUDE-TABLEAUX, OP. 39, NO. 5, AND CHOPIN'S SECOND PIANO SONATA, OP. 35

by

Shan Ling Aletheia Chua

BMus, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (conferred by Royal College of Music), 2014

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Music

Department of Music
in the Graduate School
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August 2020

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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

RESEARCH PAPER FOR A MASTER'S RECITAL OF PIANO: BEETHOVEN'S PIANO SONATA, OP. 109, DEBUSSY'S L'ISLE JOYEUSE, L. 106, RACHMANINOFF'S ETUDE-TABLEAUX, OP. 39, NO. 5, AND CHOPIN'S SECOND PIANO SONATA, OP. 35

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A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

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for the Degree of

Master of Music

in the field of Music

Approved by:

Dr. Junghwa Lee, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
June 26, 2020

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Shan Ling Aletheia Chua, for the Master of Music degree in Piano, presented on August, 2020, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: RESEARCH PAPER FOR A MASTER'S RECITAL OF PIANO: BEETHOVEN'S PIANO SONATA, OP. 109, DEBUSSY'S L'ISLE JOYEUSE, L. 106, RACHMANINOFF'S ETUDE-TABLEAUX, OP. 39, NO. 5, AND CHOPIN'S SECOND PIANO SONATA, OP. 35

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Junghwa Lee

The objective of this paper is to provide a comprehensive study of the four works presented in the author's Masters recital: Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 109, Debussy's L'Isle Joyeuse, L. 106, Rachmaninoff's Etude-Tableaux in E-flat minor, Op. 39, No. 5, and Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 35.

Aspects of harmony, structure, character, etc., of all four works are discussed, one work in each chapter. The links in each movement are also discussed in multi-movement works.

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CHAPTER 1

L.v. BEETHOVEN *PIANO SONATA NO. 30 IN E MAJOR, OP. 109*

Beethoven's Piano Sonata, Op. 109 was composed in 1820, during his late period (1814-1827), and dedicated to Maximiliane Brentano. Works that Beethoven composed during his late period include his last five piano sonatas (1816-1822), Diabelli Variations, Op. 120, Op. 119 and Op. 126 Bagatelles, Missa solemnis in D major, Symphony No. 9, and five string quartets.

First movement

This sonata has three movements. The first movement is in sonata form. The exposition has two contrasting themes, the first starting in m. 1, and the second starting in m. 9. It is uncommon even in Beethoven's music to start the second theme as an abrupt interruption of the first theme like in this case. Some precedents of this include the first movements of his Sonatas Op. 7, Op. 57, "Appassionata." Op. 81a, "Les Adieux," and Op. 90.

Measure 16 is the start of the development section as it develops the first theme. The second half of m. 48 starts the recapitulation, as it goes back to the tonic key, E major, with the second theme appearing again, this time in a different key, in m. 58. The movement ends with a coda section from mm. 86-99.

One of the most prominent elements in this movement is the stark contrast between the first theme and second theme, which begins in measure 9. There are many points of contrast between these two themes, and one of them is tempo. The tempo marking for the first theme is *Vivace, ma non troppo*, and that of the second theme is *Adagio espressivo*. Another contrasting factor of consideration is harmony. The key of the first theme is very clearly E major. The main melody is marked by quarter notes played by the right hand and starts with the third of E major. It continues with a series of rising thirds and falling fifths, G#-B-E-G#-C#-E [Figure 1.1].

Figure 1.1, mm. 1-4



The second phrase of this theme is a little more developmental in nature, and its contour rises instead of falling, leading to an F-sharp major chord, which is the V of V of E major. This suggests that it might lead to the second theme starting in the dominant key, B major, but it does not. Instead, it is interrupted by a diminished-seventh chord starting on A.

In this second theme, Beethoven has a unique way of landing in various keys. He did so a few times using falling half-steps, in measures 8-9, 12-13, and 13-14 [Figure 1.2]. The first time the falling half-step figure occurs is in the top line from the end of m. 8 to the beginning of m. 9. The top line falls from A-sharp to A, with a diminished-seventh harmony below it. The next two times it occurs, the tonality changes from F-sharp diminished, to D-sharp major (m. 13), to finally landing on B major (m. 14), the dominant key of the first theme.

Figure 1.2, half-steps in measures 8-9, 12-13, 13-14,

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, likely from Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 10, Op. 10, No. 1. The score is in G major and marked 'Adagio espressivo'. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system starts at measure 8 and ends at measure 11. The second system starts at measure 12 and ends at measure 13. The third system starts at measure 13 and ends at measure 14. The fourth system starts at measure 14 and ends at measure 15. The score includes various dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano), 'f' (forte), 'cresc.' (crescendo), and 'dim.' (diminuendo). There are also articulation markings like 'A dim 7th' and 'espressivo'. The tempo is marked 'Adagio espressivo'.

In addition to being a way to land on obscure keys eventually leading to the dominant key, Beethoven's falling half-steps also suggest another purpose. The falling half-steps in a slower tempo suggest the character of a lament in the second theme.

The development section begins in m. 16. The slur in mm. 21-35 [Figure 1.3] is unusually long – spanning more than 12 measures. This illustrates the *sempre legato* quality of this section.¹ Even though the measures following them are also marked with *sempre legato*, they are also marked with *sforzandos* on every second beat. In this way, the *legato* is maintained while the intensity increases, building into the recapitulation which starts in the second half of m. 48. Here, the first theme appears in *forte*, in contrast to the exposition. The second theme begins

¹ Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music: Their Principles and Applications* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 171.

in m. 58. It starts with a diminished-seventh chord on D. The intensity of the recapitulation section only calms down in the closing section in m. 66. The movement ends calmly in m. 99.

Figure 1.3, mm. 21-35

Second movement

The second movement starts *attacca* after the first movement ends, with the pedal connecting the two movements by releasing at the first E minor chord of the second movement, as indicated in the *Urtext* score [Figure 1.4].²

² Ludwig Beethoven, *Piano Sonata, Op. 109*, ed. Bertha Wallner, *Beethoven Klaviersonaten*, v.2 (München: G. Henle Verlag, 1980).

Figure 1.4, m. 99 (1st movement)-m.1 (2nd movement)

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled 'm. 99', shows the end of the first movement with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a pedal marking. The second system, labeled 'm. 1', begins the second movement with a *Prestissimo* tempo and *ben marcato* articulation, marked with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. A red vertical line and text annotation 'Pedal connecting the two movements' indicate the connection between the two systems.

Typically, three-movement classical sonatas have a fast-slow-fast structure, with the first and third movements being fast, and the middle movement being slow. This atypical second movement however, is marked *Prestissimo* and in sonata form. Another unique characteristic of this movement is that instead of being in the dominant key or relative minor of the key of the first movement, it is in its parallel minor, E minor.

The first theme of the exposition starts in m. 1 and the second theme starts in m. 25. Although both are in E minor, they are contrasting in terms of rhythms. Part of the first theme's motif is a dotted quarter note tied to an eighth note. The third and fifth intervals of this theme move in an opposite direction compared to third and fifth intervals of the first theme of the first movement. The former is ascending, while the latter is descending. The second theme does not have that tied rhythm, and its intervals are back to descending, in contrast with the first theme. [Figures 1.5 and 1.6]. Beethoven uses rests very specifically in this movement to indicate when he wants each note to be released. A common occurrence in this movement is that of a quarter note followed by an eighth rest. This also shows the pianist very specifically when silence is to be observed. [Figure 1.5]

Figure 1.5, 1st theme of 2nd movement, mm. 1-7

Figure 1.6, 2nd theme of 2nd movement, mm. 25-28

The development section starts in m. 66 in the minor v, B minor. The key area moves to C major in m. 79, and then moves back to E minor in mm. 97-104 through its V of V, F-sharp major in m. 96. The development section ends in m. 104 with F-sharp major, the dominant chord of B minor.

Figure 1.7, development section, mm. 66-74

The first theme in the recapitulation section starts in m. 105 and the key area is back to E minor. This is an abrupt interruption from the previous F-sharp major chord. The second theme

starts in m. 120 in C major, which is the minor sixth of E minor. It can also be said that C to E has the interval of a major third. This is not the first time that Beethoven is using this obscure key relation in his works. The second movement of his Sonata in E major, Op. 14, No. 1 alternates between E minor – the tonic, and C major – the minor sixth, several times. The first theme starts in E minor, but moves to C major straight away in the second measure of the movement. C major becomes the home key of the second theme as well as the B section of the movement. The coda starts in C major and moves back to E minor at the end. Another work that includes a notable third relation is the first movement of his “Waldstein” Sonata in C major, Op. 53. The second theme of it is in E major, a major third up from the original key. Beethoven also does this in the first movement his Fourth Piano Concerto in G major, Op. 58. The restatement of the first theme by the orchestra moves up a third to B major. Thus, this is a significant trait that Beethoven uses in his compositions. The key area stays in C major till m. 155. There is a dominant pedal point in mm. 158-166, before it goes back to E minor in m. 167.

Third movement

The third movement is the longest out of the three. It is in theme and variations form, consisted of a theme and six variations of contrasting characters. The theme is in binary form. It is marked *Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo*, which means “at a walking pace, lots of singing and expressive,” unlike a typical fast-slow-fast sonata third movement. The key is back to E major, which was the key of the first movement. The A section is from mm. 1-8, and it has a repeat sign. The B section spans the next eight measures, and it also has a repeat sign.

The first variation is presented in a higher register and is embellished with turns, dotted rhythms and grace notes. [Figure 1.8].

Figure 1.8, mm. 17-20 of 3rd movement

Var. I
Molto espressivo

The second variation is marked *Leggiermente*, meaning “lightly.” It indeed starts very lightly, with the left and right hands alternating with sixteenth notes. In the ninth measure of this movement, a new theme is presented in *legato*, as opposed to the detached notes in the beginning of this variation [Figure 1.9]

Figure 1.9, Variation II of 3rd movement, 1st theme (mm. 33-40) and 2nd theme (mm. 41-46)

Var. II
Leggiermente

The third variation, marked *Allegro vivace* in 2/4, is significantly faster. The use of double counterpoint is prevalent here.³ [Figure 1.10] According to *Oxford Music Online*, double counterpoint refers to “two-part invertible counterpoint.” That is exactly the case in the third variation where the counterpoint inverts back and forth between the left and right hands.

Figure 1.10, Variation III of 3rd movement, mm. 65-74

The image shows a musical score for Variation III of the 3rd movement, measures 65-74. The score is in 2/4 time, marked 'Allegro vivace'. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system (measures 65-70) shows a treble line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line with sixteenth-note patterns. The second system (measures 71-74) continues the patterns, with dynamic markings 'f' and 'p cresc.'.

The fourth variation is marked *Un poco meno andante cioè è un poco più adagio come il tema*. That means “similar to andante but a little slower than the theme.” This tempo indication, coupled with a change in meter to 9/8, gives it a more laidback character, compared to the variation preceding it.

The fifth variation is marked *Allegro, ma non troppo*, which means “fast but not too much.” The meter changes again, to 2/2, giving this variation rhythmically a faster pace [Figure 1.11].

³ Stainkaph, *Form and Analysis of the Complete Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas*, 57.

Figure 1.11, Variation V of 3rd movement, mm. 113-123

The image shows a musical score for Variation V, marked 'Allegro, ma non troppo'. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It begins with a piano introduction marked 'f'. The right hand plays a melodic line with various ornaments and fingerings, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The piece concludes with a 'sempre f' marking.

The sixth variation is the longest one. It starts slow with quarter notes in 3/4 meter, then subdivides to eighth notes in m. 155. In m. 157, the meter changes to 9/8. The subdivision continues, from eighth notes to sixteenth notes in m. 158, and after that to thirty-second notes at the last third of m. 160, like a written-out accelerando [Figure 1.12]. At the end of m. 164, visually, the rhythm seems to slow back down, as it is back to eighth notes. It is however harmonized by trills, which maintains the same tempo of the fast thirty-second-note rhythm. The thirty-second notes return in m. 169, with the trills still continuing. Both run together simultaneously till m. 187. After that, the busy and active section comes to an end. From m. 188 till the end, the music calms down as the theme from the beginning returns.

Figure 1.12, Variation VI of 3rd movement, mm. 153-166

Var. VI
Tempo I del tema
Cantabile

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 153-158) shows a violin melody with a cantabile character and a piano accompaniment. The second system (measures 159-164) features a 'cresc.' marking and more complex rhythmic patterns. The third system (measures 165-166) ends with 'poco a poco' markings and a final cadence.

Conclusion

In summary, the three movements of this sonata are different from one another in terms of character and form. However, they are similar in terms of tonality: E major – E minor – E major. They are also similar in that within each movement there are complex and changing rhythms. A successful performance of this sonata requires the pianist to execute these rhythms accurately and with technical dexterity.

CHAPTER 2

C. DEBUSSY L'ISLE JOYEUSE

Composed in 1904, Debussy's *L'Isle Joyeuse* is a single-movement piece. Its title is French for "Pleasure Island." Many things inspired the composition of this piece. Worth mentioning are these two main factors: Watteau's painting, *L'embarquement pour Cythère* (The Embarkation for Cythera) [Figure 2.1]; and Debussy's divorce and remarriage.

Figure 2.1



Watteau's painting of *The Embarkation for Cythera* and what happened in Debussy's own life in terms of his love interest are two factors that were closely intertwined in the inspiration of this work. Debussy had fallen in love with Emma Bardac. After divorcing his wife,

Lilly, he eloped with Emma to Jersey in 1904.⁴ Because of this, he saw Jersey as the “Pleasure Island” or Cythera that was portrayed in Watteau’s painting.⁵

The form of *L’Isle Joyeuse* is similar to that of a rondo form. The figure below shows the sections that form the entire piece [Figure 2.2]

Figure 2.2

Section	Measures
a	1-8
b	9-20
c	21-35
d	36-51
a2	52-63
b2	64-66
e	67-98
f	99-144
b3	145-147
c2	148-157
a3	158-159
b4	160-165
c3	166-187
b5	188-203
c4	204-219
e2	220-243
a4	244-255

Some of them are fragments, such as the sections that come after the middle e and f sections.

The opening section begins with a trill on C-sharp, and a series of broken augmented triads, which gives it an ethereal quality. Finally, in m. 7, A major is established.

⁴ Marcel Dietschy, *A Portrait of Claude Debussy*, ed. trans. William Ashbrook, Margaret Cobb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 133.

⁵ Paul Roberts, *Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy*, ed. Reinfard Pauly (Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1996), 101.

Instead of the conventional major or minor tonality, modes are used here. A mix of Lydian and Mixolydian modes makes the acoustic scale on A.⁶ The acoustic scale is similar to the whole tone scale. The first four notes are the same, but the two scales end differently. To illustrate, the whole-tone scale on A has the following notes: A – B – C-sharp – D-sharp – F – G – A, while the acoustic scale on A has the following notes: A – B – C-sharp – D-sharp – E – F-sharp – G – A. This scale was used in the introduction, and in later sections throughout the piece as well.⁷ Adding on to that, the opening measures before m. 7 are played *Quasi una cadenza*, which means “like a cadenza.” This suggests liberty in terms of tempo and expression.

When the tonality of A major is finally established in m. 7, it comes with the direction of *Modéré et très souple*, which means “moderate and very supple.” This is coupled with *léger et rythmé*, indicated two measures later. This means “light and rhythmic.”

Something else that stands out in this piece is the changing meters. The meter switches between 4/4 and 3/8 several times. In m. 27, the 4/4 pulse can be heard as 3+2+3/8 to prepare for the change to 3/8 meter in the next measure [Figure 2.3].⁸ Similarly, in mm. 62-63, a hemiola prepares for a change back to 4/4 meter [Figure 2.4].⁹ The only change in meter with no prior preparation is that in m. 67, where the meter changes from 4/4 to 3/8.

⁶ Roy Howat, *Debussy in Proportion: A Musical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 48.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁹ Ibid.

Figure 2.3, mm. 26-31

Figure 2.4, mm. 61-65

The middle section (e and f, as stated in Figure 2.2) is the most contrasting one, compared to the rest of the piece. Following the abrupt change in meter, the mood calms down. It is marked with the directions: *Un peu cédé*, *Molto rubato* and *ondoyant et expressif* which means “a little yielded with a lot of rubato,” and “undulating and expressive,” respectively. The word “undulating” suggests the movement of waves in the sea. The quintuplets in the left hand further

contribute to the rhythmic complexity and the need for rubato in this section.¹⁰ The undulating section precedes an arpeggio transition starting in m. 99. This leads to m. 145, beginning a section deriving from the earlier a, b, and c sections.

This next section, beginning in m. 220 is the climax of the entire piece. It is once again having the expression of *Un peu cédé* and is derived from the earlier section with the same expression. This time, instead of an undulating characteristic, it is more resolute. What makes it so is the quicker rhythm and accents in the left hand, and the constant *fortissimo* in the dynamics [Figure 2.5].

Figure 2.5, mm. 216-230

The theme in the introduction appears again, this time in the closing section, starting in m. 244. This time it has the marking of *très animé jusqu'à la fin*, which means “very animated

¹⁰ Paul Roberts, *Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy*, ed. Reinfard Pauly (Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1996), 109.

till the end.” This indicates the increased intensity as compared with the opening sections. The intensity is further emphasized by several crescendos beginning with *fortissimo* starting from m. 244 and irregular accents in mm. 248-251. The emphasis (tenuto) in those measures shift from the third beat to the second beat of the measure [Figure 2.6]. The strongest dynamic, *fortissisimo* (*fff*) appears after those four measures, and crescendos even further leading to a big ending in the last measure, on the lowest key of the piano.

Figure 2.6

In conclusion, Debussy uses different scales, changing meters, rhythms, dynamics and characters in this piece. All these elements come together in painting his picture of “Pleasure Island.”

CHAPTER 3

RACHMANINOFF *ETUDE-TABLEAUX* IN E-FLAT MINOR, OP. 39, NO. 5

Rachmaninoff's Op. 39 etudes are his last important works written for piano before he left Russia for the last time in 1917.¹¹ The word "Tableaux" used in the title alludes to "pictures, paintings, or scenes," as some of them were inspired by paintings.¹² The Op. 39 etudes were also influenced by the *Dies irae* sequence of the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead, and it is quoted in most of the etudes.¹³ The first two phrases of the *Dies irae* have the contour of F – E – F – D – E – C – D – D and F – F – G – F – E – D – C – E – F – E – D¹⁴. The tonality of it is not specific and can be changed. Only the first four notes of the chant are typically used in quotations of it.¹⁵

Other than his encounters with loss of loved ones, Rachmaninoff was influenced by the *Dies irae* motif also because he conducted some works that quoted it.¹⁶ They include Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 3 in G major, Op. 55 (1884), and Saint-Saëns's Danse Macabre, Op. 40 (1874).¹⁷ Before his Op. 39 etudes, Rachmaninoff already composed a few works in which he quoted the *Dies irae* motif. They include his Symphony No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 13 (1895),

¹¹ Raymond Gitz, "A study of musical and extra-musical imagery in Rachmaninoff's "Etudes-Tableaux", opus 39" (D.M.A. diss., Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1990), 10, 14.

¹² Ibid., 1-2.

¹³ Ibid., 16.

¹⁴ Ibid., 17.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 17-18.

¹⁷ Ibid., 17-19.

Symphony No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 27 (1906-1907), Sonata No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 28 (1907), *The Isle of the Dead*, Op. 29 (1909), and *The Bells*, Op. 35 (1913).¹⁸

The Op. 39 etudes were composed during a difficult time, when three people close to Rachmaninoff: Alexander Scriabin, Sergei Taneyev (Rachmaninoff and Scriabin's former professor), and Rachmaninoff's father had died within a short period of time. On top of that, he was soon to experience the 1917 Revolution.¹⁹ All these events contributed to the somber mood of his Op. 39 etudes.²⁰

The fifth etude in this set is one of his most programmed pieces. Rachmaninoff performed it several times and received high praise for his performance.²¹ It is in rounded binary form with an extended coda. The opening section is marked *Appassionato* and *molto marcato*. These directions, along with the triplet rhythms, contribute to the intensity of this section. Even though the triplet rhythms in the harmony have certain intensity, one must be careful not to let the melody be overpowered by the triplet rhythms as they serve the function of supporting materials.

The development section starts in m. 26 with a change in meter, from 4/4 to 6/4. The mood calms down as well, with the left hand playing broken chords instead of blocked chords, having more of a lilt to it. This section develops both in terms of dynamics as well as tonality [Figure 3.1]. Rachmaninoff has a unique way of using chromaticism to develop the section. This

¹⁸ Raymond Gitz, "A study of musical and extra-musical imagery in Rachmaninoff's "Etudes-Tableaux", opus 39", 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-10.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

can be seen by examining the chord progressions in this section. Firstly, the development section can be divided into two parts: mm. 26-40 and mm. 41-52. Examining the first part, the chord progression unfolds as: B-flat major – B-flat minor – B minor – G7 – C major – D7 – G major – F#7 – B major. It moves from B-flat to B with a progression similar to that of a circle of fifths. The dynamics here gradually increase from *piano* to *fortissimo*. It seems to come to a climax when arriving at B major in m. 41, but the development does not end there. It continues to build even more. Now in the second part of the development, the harmonic progression moves more chromatically, as such: B major – F major – G major – A major – B-flat major and B minor – G-sharp dim7 – A-flat7 – A7 – B-flat7 – E-flat minor. Adding on to the intensity is the quickening of the rhythm. In this part (mm. 41-52), the triplet rhythm of the opening returns.

Figure 3.1, mm. 25-30

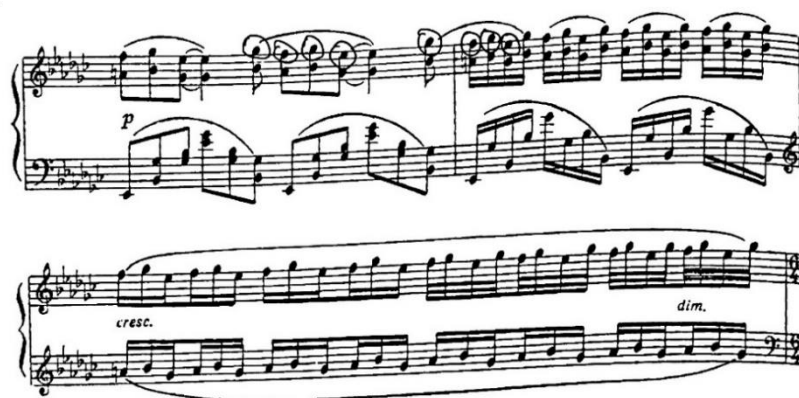


The recapitulation starts in m. 53, this time the statement of the theme is a lot heavier and intense, with the strongest dynamic being *fortissisimo* (*fff*). This time the melody is played by the left hand, and the chords played by the right hand. The melody in the middle voice played by the left hand must be emphasized here over the big chords in the right hand. This is usually done by

playing most of the melody with the thumb of the left hand, and also having an accent on every melodic note as indicated in the score.

A transition to the coda begins in m. 66. It is in this section that quotation of the *Dies irae* motif appears in the form of G-flat – F – G-flat – E-flat [Figure 3.2]

Figure 3.2



The extended coda section begins in m. 73 and continues to the end (m. 82). The harmony switches back and forth between E-flat minor and E-flat major, like a conflict between dark and light. Eventually, light triumphs and the piece ends in E-flat major.

CHAPTER 4

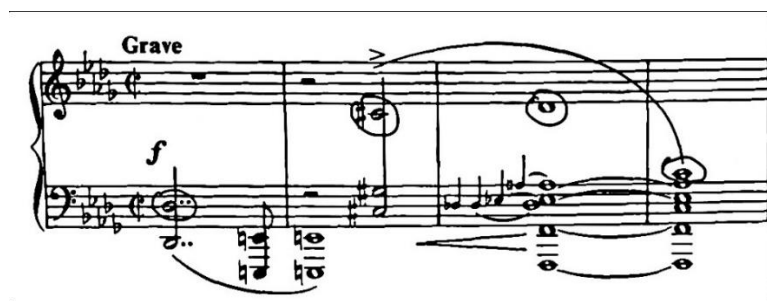
CHOPIN SONATA IN B-FLAT MINOR, OP. 35

Composed in 1839, Chopin's B-flat minor Sonata is one of his only three sonatas composed for the piano. It was first conceived as a funeral march, which became the third movement of the four-movement sonata.²²

First movement

The first movement is in sonata form. It starts with a slow and short introduction in the first four measures, marked *Grave*. This slow introduction leads both melodically and harmonically together to the start of the first theme in B-flat minor. The melodic contour of the introduction unfolds as: D-flat – C-sharp – D-flat – C – B-flat [Figure 4.1].

Figure 4.1, 1st movement, mm. 1-4



The alternation between D-flat and its enharmonic C-sharp is at first puzzling, but it is written as such in relation with the harmony which looks like this: E – F – B-flat. The C-sharp in the upper voices in m. 2 is written in relation to the E in the bass, forming a major sixth interval. The following D-flat in m. 3 is written in relation to the F in the harmony. It is minor sixth suspension, leading to the fifth, the C in m. 4, and then to the tonic in m. 5, which begins the first

²² Anatole Leikin, "The sonatas," in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 161.

theme of the exposition in a faster tempo. A similar enharmonic relationship can be found in Chopin's Prelude in D-flat major, Op. 28, No. 15, "Raindrop," where A-flat transitions to G-sharp at the beginning of the middle section because of a modulation from D-flat major to C-sharp minor. [Figure 4.2]

Figure 4.2, Chopin Prelude, Op. 28, No, 15, mm. 24-33

The first theme of the exposition remains centered on B-flat minor. In its restatement, the accents shift to the second eighth-notes of each group [Figure 4.3]. In addition to that, the accented notes are stated as full triads instead of single notes. This emphasis intensifies the harmony in this restatement of the theme.

Figure 4.3, 1st movement, accents from mm. 25-32

The image displays a musical score for the first movement, measures 22 through 32. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems. Each system has a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 3/4. The music features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass and a more complex melodic line in the treble. Accents are marked with a small 'f' and a wedge-shaped symbol above the notes in the treble staff. In the bass staff, asterisks are placed below the notes to indicate accents. The first system (measures 22-25) has eight asterisks. The second system (measures 26-29) has one asterisk. The third system (measures 30-32) has three asterisks.

The second theme begins in D-flat major, the relative major of B-flat minor. Here in the second theme, begins the alternation between F and G-flat (mm. 42-43) which appears as a common motif throughout the sonata. The motif of mm. 41-44, appears again in its varied form in mm. 45-48. In both places, the G-flat appears as an ornament to F, its principal note. Its consequent phrase is from mm. 49-56. A similar pattern occurs in mm. 57-81. The exposition ends with both G-flat and F in one chord, an A-flat dominant-seventh chord with an added sixth [Figure 4.4].

Figure 4.4, 1st movement, mm. 103-104 (chord circled)

The image shows a musical score for the first movement, measures 103-104. The score is in two systems. The first system (mm. 98-103) shows a piano accompaniment with a circled chord in the final measure (m. 103). The second system (mm. 104-107) shows a piano accompaniment with a circled chord in the final measure (m. 104). The score includes markings for 'ritenuto' and 'sotto voce'.

To lead into the development section, the A-flat dominant-seventh with an added sixth progresses to an F-sharp minor chord. The development section begins in m. 105. The rhythm of the motif in the exposition is retained here and continues on as a common feature for the rest of the movement.

The recapitulation begins in m. 169 with the second theme, in B-flat major. The first theme is omitted, and does not appear till the closing section which begins in m. 229 [Figure 4.5].

Figure 4.5, 1st movement, closing section, mm. 229-241

The image shows a musical score for the closing section of the first movement, measures 226-241. The score is in E-flat major and 3/4 time. It features a piano accompaniment with a prominent bass line and a treble line with chords. Measure 229 is marked 'm.229' and 'stretto'. The score ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final chord.

Second movement

The second movement has the form of a scherzo and trio. Both the scherzo and trio sections are in ternary A-B-A' form, and in the larger sense, the entire movement follows the ternary structure of scherzo-trio-scherzo. It is the only movement in the subdominant key, E-flat minor, while the rest of the movements are all in B-flat minor.

The motif of G-flat and F continues in the scherzo, starting at m. 2 when the melodic line ascends from F to G-flat. This continues as a common factor in the A section of the scherzo. One prominent feature to note in the A sections of the scherzo is that they start with the same motif but develop and end differently. For example, the material in mm. 1-5 and mm. 21-25 is the same, but mm. 6-20 and mm. 26-36 develop in very different directions. In m. 6, almost all the flats in the key signature are maintained [Figure 4.6], whereas in m. 26, B-flat and A-flat are sharpened to B-natural and A-natural. This aids in the modulation to F-sharp minor in mm. 32-36 [Figure 4.7].

Figure 4.6, 2nd movement, mm. 1-9

Scherzo

5

m.6

Figure 4.7, 2nd movement, mm. 17-37

17

pp

23

m.26

28

m.28

33

After a chromatic B section from mm. 37-64, the A section returns in m. 65. It starts with the same material as the opening A section, but this time it develops in a completely different direction as the first two times. In mm. 73-76, both hands leap in different directions before closing the section and ending in E-flat minor in mm. 77-80 [Figure 4.8]. This difference in direction in the A sections of the scherzo serves as a development of the theme to a climax. The scherzo, as its name suggests, has a lively character. This character changes in the trio section.

Figure 4.8, 2nd movement, mm. 64-80

The trio starts in G-flat major, the relative major of the key of this movement. For clarity, the sections of the trio will be referred to as C-D-C'. The C section has the style and character of a waltz. The antecedent phrase of the C section's theme is repeated three times, and each time it is answered by a different consequent phrase in a different key [Figure 4.9]. At the third time, the consequent phrase finally resolves to G-flat major, ending the C section.

Figure 4.9, 2nd movement, 1st antecedent and consequent phrase of C section (mm. 85-97), 2nd such phrase (mm. 101-112), 3rd such phrase (mm. 121-132)

m.85

m.101

m.112

m.127

52 K.172

The D section of the waltz has a more lyrical character, with long lines of phrasing, especially in the left hand, resembling a cello melody. The C section returns after this, and so does the scherzo section.

Similar to the first A section, this returning scherzo section also has its motifs moving in different directions. The first two times (mm. 189-208, mm. 208-224) are the same as that of the

opening section (mm. 1-20, mm. 21-36). The third time the motif appears (m. 253), it goes in a completely new direction. At first it seems to be the same as the second time, as m. 259 has the same material as m. 215. However, it leads to leaps in opposite directions in both hands, similar to mm. 73-36 in the first A section. This leaping section ends on G-flat major and leads to the closing section. The closing section is from mm. 273-287 and it is in G-flat major. The movement ends in the key of its relative major, G-flat major

Third movement

The third movement is a funeral march. It is in ternary form. It is here that the culmination of the F and G-flat alternation occurs. This is a recurring theme throughout the movement, especially in its first theme. The F and G-flat notes appear specifically in these following chords respectively: B-flat minor and G-flat major. This marks another common factor in this sonata, the alternation between B-flat minor and G-flat major, which has an interval of a flattened sixth (B-flat to G-flat) and major third (G-flat to B-flat). The flattened six relationship is a prominent feature in the music of Schubert. It also features in the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 109, as mentioned in Chapter 1 of this paper. These two chords keep alternating back and forth, depicting funeral bells.²³ The melody in the right hand is punctuated with dotted rhythms. At first the march starts softly as if from a distance. It intensifies in m. 7, where it is suddenly loud. It occurs again in m. 8, and then again in the higher octave and *sforzando* in mm. 11-12. The rhythm also changes at the beginning of those measures, the dotted rhythm from before gives way to a more even rhythm, i.e., two eighth-notes

²³ Anatole Leikin, "The sonatas," in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 174.

in the pitches of B-flat and A-flat. The dotted rhythms continue in the second theme which begins in m. 15. The second theme also has its outbursts of dramatic moments, at the crescendo and decrescendo in mm. 15-16 and mm. 22-24 [Figure 4.10]. It is worth noting that the crescendo in m. 15 starts with *forte*, and that of m. 22 starts with *fortissimo*.

Figure 4.10, 3rd movement, mm. 15-16, mm. 22-24

The image displays two pages of musical notation for the 3rd movement. The left page is labeled 'm.15' and shows measures 15 and 16. The right page is labeled 'm.22' and shows measures 22 and 24. Both pages feature a piano (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The piano part has a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests. The bass line has a simpler, more rhythmic pattern. Dynamic markings include *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). There are also crescendo and decrescendo hairpins. The notation includes various accidentals and articulation marks.

The middle section has an immediate change of mood. It suddenly becomes very calm, with a lyrical melody and a dynamic marking of *pianissimo*. It has minimal dynamic contrasts except the crescendo and decrescendo at the turn of the phrase in m. 46. The A section of the movement returns in m. 55.

Fourth movement

The fourth movement is in fast tempo and it needs to be played lightly and evenly, thus requiring consistent technical preparation. Both hands are played in unison, one octave apart, for the entire movement. It is marked with *sotto voce e legato*, which means that it should be performed “very softly and with smooth *legato* phrasing.” To follow the marking of *sotto voce*, the performer may choose to play the movement with the *una corda* pedal down. It is different from most virtuoso pieces in that it should be played very lightly, with fingers not deep into the keys.

Conclusion

In summary, Chopin does the “unexpected” many times in this sonata. The first movement goes to an unexpected key area in the development. The unexpected aspects of the second movement are that it is a scherzo, and its themes move in different directions during their restatements. In the third movement, what is unexpected is the importance it plays in the sonata. It was the first part to be composed and originally conceived as a piece by itself. It also acts as a glue, unifying the rest of the sonata with the F and G-flat motif. The fourth movement is also unconventional as it is fast and light instead of steady and grounded like typical finale movements.

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