

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Works for Piano by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Debussy, Takemitsu, and  
Chopin

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the degree of Master of Music in Music, Performance

By  
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## Abstract

Works for Piano by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Debussy, Takemitsu, and  
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By

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Master of Music in Music, Performance

This thesis is a set of program notes that cover the historical background and a formal analysis of works performed in my graduate solo recital and concerto recital. The graduate solo recital consisted of six sets of pieces by Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Robert Schumann, Claude Debussy, and Tōru Takemitsu. Three of the six pieces, those composed by Mozart, Beethoven, and Schumann, are piano sonatas and consist of two to four contrasting movements. Debussy's *Études* are from the impressionistic period, and feature virtuosity and a wide range of colors. Following Debussy's *Études*, the program concluded with Takemitsu's *Rain Tree Sketch II*, an avant-garde contemporary work from 1992 by a Japanese composer who dedicated the piece to Olivier Messiaen. The concerto program featured Frédéric Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21. The piano concerto consists of three contrasting movements.

## Section 1: Johann Sebastian Bach – Well-Tempered Clavier Book I Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Minor, BWV 867

German composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) wrote *The Well-Tempered Clavier (WTC) Book I* in 1722, during his residence at the court of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen. It was intended for “musical young people eager to learn, as well as for a special pastime for those who are already proficient in this study.”<sup>1</sup> Bach never published this work although he used it in teaching. Keller explains that this may be due to fear, since at the time, “the *empfindsam* and *galant* style” became predominant and thus “the market would be too limited.”<sup>2</sup> However, by 1800–1802, at least three publishers printed this work due to its popularity. There is one copy of the work that still exists in Bach’s own handwriting. Other works from this period include the *Brandenburg Concertos*, *English Suites*, *French Suites*, *Inventions*, and *Sinfonias*.

The *WTC* was written for clavier tuned in equal temperament, a system discovered by organist Andreas Werckmeister, where all octaves are divided into twelve equal parts so the instrument would be “aesthetically tolerable in all” keys.<sup>3</sup> Bach composed a set of preludes and fugues for all twenty-four major and minor keys. Chromatically arranged sets of preludes and fugues originally date back to Johann Kaspar Ferdinand Fischer’s organ music in 1702, *Ariadne musica*. However, Bach used the form in a new style, with “a special charm, a human warmth . . . by their interconnection, their

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<sup>1</sup> Hermann Keller, and Leigh Gerdine, *The Well-Tempered Clavier by Johann Sebastian Bach* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Keller, *The Well-Tempered Clavier by Johann Sebastian Bach*, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Cecil Gray, *The Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues of J. S. Bach* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 7.

texture, harmony, and elements of musical expression (tempo, dynamics, articulation, and ornamentation).”<sup>4</sup>

In 1744, Bach wrote the *WTC, Book II*. In his comparison between the two books, Gray calls the second set “more consistent and homogeneous of the two,” and the first set has “a definite logic in the sequence of the numbers” resulting in the fact that “the particular key in which each number is written is the inevitable, the absolutely right key.”<sup>5</sup>

### Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Minor, BWV 867 – Prelude

The prelude from *Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Minor, BWV 867* is in arioso style. Keller compares the somberness of this prelude to the funeral march from Chopin’s Sonata Op. 35, C.P.E. Bach’s “*Adagio assai mesto e sostenuto*,” and Bach’s *Cantata, Actus tragicus*. Gray compares it to Bach’s *Passions* due to its evocation of religious associations.<sup>6</sup> The rhythm along with the monotonous ostinato eighth notes of the bass gives the “impression of marching along in a funeral procession.”<sup>7</sup> According to Ledbetter, other prototypes suggested for this prelude includes the Toccata, Tastera, or the Arpeggiata.<sup>8</sup>

The harmonic structure of the prelude is described in Fig. 1.1 with four main sections. The “strict form objectifies the expression of suppressed pathos which should

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<sup>4</sup> Keller, *The Well-Tempered Clavier by Johann Sebastian Bach*, 27.

<sup>5</sup> Keller, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Gray, *The Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues of J. S. Bach*, 71.

<sup>7</sup> Keller, 118.

<sup>8</sup> David Ledbetter, *Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier: The 48 Preludes and Fugues* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 222.



The key schemes and the entrances of the subject and answer is organized in Fig.

1.3.

bar number	1-3	3-5	5-10	10-12	12-14	15-17	17-25	25-27	27-29	29-31	31-34	34-36	37-39	39-46
section	Part I (Exposition)						Part II							
subsection							Episode							Episode II
soprano	subject							subject						
2nd soprano		t answer							answer					
alto				subject									answer	
tenor					answer					subject				
bass						subject					answer			
key/harmony	b $\flat$ m	f m		b $\flat$ m	f m	b $\flat$ m	b $\flat$ m $\rightarrow$ D $\flat$	D $\flat$	e $\flat$ m	B $\flat$ m	e $\flat$ m		D $\flat$	A $\flat$ $\rightarrow$ E $\flat$ $\rightarrow$ B $\flat$

  

bar number	46-48	48-50	50-52	51-53	52-54	53-55	55-57	57-67	67-69	68-70	69-71	72-75	
section	Part III							Part IV (Closing)					
subsection			stretto I					Episode III	Stretto II				
soprano			answer						subject				
2nd soprano			answer				subject			answer			
alto				subject			answer			subject			
tenor	answer					answer					answer		
bass		answer			answer						subject		
key/harmony	b $\flat$		e $\flat$ m				e $\flat$ m $\rightarrow$ b $\flat$ m		b $\flat$ m				

Fig. 1.3 BWV 867 Fugue Key Scheme

This fugue can be considered in four different harmonic sections divided by three episodes at measures 17, 39, and 57. The second sections features a decrease in number of voices and change from the minor key to D-flat major (measure 25). The third section starts with a return to the B-flat minor key that leads into a highpoint with a fivefold stretto (measure 50) in E-flat minor.<sup>13</sup> The fugue has the second and more powerful stretto in the tonic key at measure 67 where the subjects overlap immediately after another, resulting in a triumphal ending in the major chord.

<sup>13</sup> Bach, *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier Teil I*, 107.

## Section 2: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Sonata No. 17 in B-flat Major, K. 570

*Sonata No. 17 in B-flat Major* is the second to last of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's (1756–1791) piano sonatas. It was written in February of 1788 during his Vienna years prior to his departure for Berlin. According to Maynard Solomon's book, Mozart's letters starting from around 1788 show signs of "underlying uneasiness, even anxiety," where he wrote to ask for loans from Michael Puchberg, who "had become invested as an ideal father" to Mozart.<sup>14</sup> Mozart may have started to suffer from depression in the following years, which he labels in a letter from 1790 as "my constant sadness," and his heart as "if people could see into my heart, . . . I should almost feel ashamed. To me everything is cold—cold as ice . . . everything seems so empty."<sup>15</sup> Following this year 1788, Mozart's productivity decreases, composing almost no works for the first half of 1789. The few compositions from Mozart during these years were "arguably only for an elite audience," perhaps to gain a source of income.<sup>16</sup>

Mozart's works from this period, including this B-flat major sonata, stress "the rigorous, challenging aspects" and demand "emotional and intellectual demands upon audiences," and were perceived as writing only for a group of connoisseurs at the time.<sup>17</sup> Like many of Mozart's later piano works, the sonata features a "wealth of articulation that is rare in works by eighteenth-century composers" including bowing-inspired

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<sup>14</sup> Maynard Solomon, *Mozart: A Life*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1995), 458.

<sup>15</sup> Solomon, *Mozart: A Life*, 459.

<sup>16</sup> Solomon, 465.

<sup>17</sup> Solomon, 461.

articulation.<sup>18</sup> In fact, this sonata was originally printed as a “violin sonata by publisher Arteria in 1796.”<sup>19</sup>

It is a three-movement sonata:

*I. Allegro*

*II. Adagio*

*III. Allegretto*

The first movement is in sonata-allegro form, and opens with an amiable first theme, a melodic broken B-flat chord in a simple lilting rhythm line played by both hands an octave apart. This opening theme consists of two note slurs, suggestive of violin bowing, and requires a subtle break between the opening measures. The secondary key area starts on measure 41 in the dominant key, F major. Perhaps following Haydn’s stylistic feature, the secondary key theme is based on the principle theme played in the tenor register. One of the unique features of this sonata is a new thematic material that appears at the bridge (measure 21). While almost sounding like a secondary theme, it quickly flows into the virtuosic passages (measures 35–40) that serve as a transition to the secondary key area in measure 41. Mozart uses this bridge theme from measure 21 at the development (measure 81) in the D-flat major. In fact, the development of this sonata uses the same material from exposition’s bridge, starting with the key of D-flat major, modulating to the secondary key area theme in the key of C minor (measure 101), and using circle of fifths to prepare for the return to the recapitulation at measure 133. The

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<sup>18</sup> Eva Badura-Skoda, and Paul Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard*, (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1962), 67.

<sup>19</sup> Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard*, 55.

connection between the themes of the primary and secondary key, and sharing of material in the development and transition of exposition and recapitulation leads to an increasing “sense of unity” throughout the piece.<sup>20</sup>

The second movement, Adagio, is in the subdominant key (E-flat major) and is in a loose rondo-form. The principle theme (measures 1–12) is in a-b-a form where each section is four bars long. This opening theme, along with the B section, has a string-quartet texture because of the melody line doubled in third intervals. The B section (measure 13) that follows the principle theme is in the relative minor key, c minor, and has a contrasting mood with a sense of agitation. The C section starts on measure 32 and introduces the galant-style texture, featuring a lyrical and gentle melody in the right hand while the left hand accompanies with alberti bass. This C section is in the subdominant key, A-flat major.

The third movement, Allegretto, is in the key of B-flat major, and is also in a loose rondo-form. Displaying an influence of *opera buffa*, it is a delightful and comical fast movement. The chromaticism and the syncopated rhythm open the piece in a whimsical manner. The B-section starts at measure 24, in the melody in 6<sup>th</sup> intervals while maintaining the syncopated rhythm of the main theme. The C section starts at measure 45 where rhythm suddenly changes to strict eighth notes. This section uses chromaticism to build harmonic tension before A section returns at measure 63.

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<sup>20</sup> Mario Raymond Mercado, *The Evolution of Mozart's Pianistic Style*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 102.

### Section 3: Ludwig van Beethoven – Sonata in E Minor, Op. 90

Ludwig van Beethoven's (1770–1827) autograph of Sonata in E Minor, Op. 90 dates August 16, 1814. It was dedicated to Prince Karl Lichnowsky's younger brother, Count Moritz Lichnowsky. Beethoven described the sonata to Moritz Lichnowsky, who had lately remarried at the time, with “a boisterous laugh” that the first movement represented “a struggle between the head and heart,” the second “a conversation with the beloved.”<sup>21</sup>

While Beethoven emphasized music for solo piano in contrast to Haydn and Mozart, he only wrote four sonatas between the years 1809 to 1814. Op. 90 was written five years after his previous piano sonata, Op. 81a “*Les Adieux*.” The next sonata, Op. 101 is published over a year later.<sup>22</sup> In Beethoven's sketchbook, Op. 90 “[faces] a reconstruction of ‘Fidelio.’” Behrend refers to Op. 90 sonata as “the only work produced by Beethoven at this time . . . without any exterior impulse,” such as to please authoritative figures for financial purposes, and thus this work exposes Beethoven at an open introverted state “in which he has retired into himself, to quiet communion with his true, inner spirit.”<sup>23</sup> This sonata, the last of Beethoven's middle period sonatas, is considered one of the “intimate ones,” naturally leading to his last Sonatas.

The notion of Beethoven and his “beloved” is an interesting concept to contemplate. In 1812, Beethoven wrote a love letter addressed “To the Immortal Beloved.” The letter was apparently never sent, “but rather concealed in private papers in

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<sup>21</sup> William Behrend and Ingeborg Lund, *Ludwig Van Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas*, (London; Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1927), 148.

<sup>22</sup> Behrend, *Ludwig Van Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas*, 142.

<sup>23</sup> Behrend, 144.

a secret drawer in his desk.”<sup>24</sup> The identity of the “Immortal Beloved,” is a debatable topic, and Stewart Gordon’s book suggests Antonie Brentano (1780–1869), who married Franz Bretano in 1898.<sup>25</sup> Beethoven’s yearning for the unobtainable lover may be reflected in the introverted, heartfelt and thoughtful nature of this particular sonata.

The sonata consists of two movements, the first in E minor and second in the parallel major:

- I. *Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck (With liveliness and throughout with feeling and expression)*
- II. *Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen (Not too vigorous and presented very songfully)*

The first movement is in a sonata-allegro form with no double bar after the exposition. The first theme consists of a short rhythmic motif with two-note slurs with opposing dynamics (measures 1–8). This first theme is followed by a second and contrasting second theme—a lyrical answer (measures 8–16). This immediate contrasting theme lead to the interpretation that this sonata represents the struggle between the head and heart, or in Behrend’s words, the struggle to “return to his better self, of changing moods of a courageous spirit, of self-confidence, resignation and timidity.”<sup>26</sup> The second key area starts on measure 45 in the dominant minor key (B minor), where constant left hand eighth-notes create tension toward measure 55—a difficult section with the melody

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<sup>24</sup> Stewart Gordon, *Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas: A Handbook for Performers*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 227.

<sup>25</sup> Gordon, *Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas: A Handbook for Performers*, 227.

<sup>26</sup> Behrend, 144.

in long notes that outline the B-minor chord in the right hand while left hand plays alberti bass-like pattern with tenth intervals.<sup>27</sup>

In the development (measure 85), Beethoven overlaps the first theme of the primary key area as melody and the secondary key area theme's eighth note accompaniment as the middle voice in A minor. As a result, he continues to build tension while using the familiar themes. In the latter half of the development in measure 113, the second theme of the primary key area appears in the left hand while the right hand plays fast arpeggio passages to drive the piece to its peak moment in measures 130–133. Four note descending steps is repeated from measure 131 using augmentation—starting from sixteenth-notes to half note values—and then in a canon form.

The recapitulation, starting at measure 143, is very similar to the exposition. The opening theme is marked *pp* in the short coda from measures 231–245. The coda brings the piece to a stark ending with a five measure long *ritardando* and a *diminuendo* to *pp*. Behrend's book suggests that Beethoven planned and sketched the ending of the movement prior to composing the rest of the piece: “with luminous soaring notes followed immediately by sad resignation, were to be the close of the sonata.”<sup>28</sup>

The second movement, in the parallel major (E major), contrasts with the first movement, and is of equal importance. It features one of Beethoven's most beloved lyrical melodies. It is in a rondo-sonata form, ABACABA followed by a coda, where the piece continues to return to the A section, “lovely, singing melody,” in its identical form,

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<sup>27</sup> Gordon, *Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas: A Handbook for Performers*, 228.

<sup>28</sup> Behrend, 145.

where the “monotony” creates restfulness, like a “soothing cradle-song.”<sup>29</sup> B theme appears first in the dominant key (measure 41) and second time in the tonic key (measure 181); it is also a lyrical theme consisting of dotted quarter-notes and eighth notes, and Stewart Gordon refers to the theme as an afterthought to the main theme<sup>30</sup>. The B section is followed by a short coda (measure 60) before the Schubertian A theme returns at measure 69. Czerny uses this movement in his commentary: “Since the theme recurs often, the player must strive to throw it into relief by playing it each time, however delicately, with different nuances.”<sup>31</sup> Lastly, the C section of this sonata rondo is at measure 114. It starts in C major, using the theme from the closing section (measure 60), repeats in C minor, C-sharp minor, and C-sharp major, modulating back to E-major for the return of A section at measure 139. The coda starts at measure 230, where both the right and left hand plays the main theme in a string quartet like texture. Like the first movement, the piece comes to an introverted and a thoughtful ending, marked by *dolce* (measure 265), brief appearance of the main theme (measure 276), five measure long *ritardando* (measures 281–285), and a three measure long *accelerando* and the last phrase starting with a *crescendo* and reducing to *a tempo* last beats marked *p* and *pp*.

Hans von Bülow suggests bringing out the contrast between the two movements by playing as though “spoken” and “sung.”<sup>32</sup> This idea is in alignment with the lengths of the phrases in the respective movements, and their characters. As per the use of rubato and timing freedom, composer and Beethoven’s pupil, friend and secretary, Ferdinand

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<sup>29</sup> Behrend, 145.

<sup>30</sup> Ludwig van Beethoven, *Piano Sonatas, Vol 4: Nos. 25-32* (California: Alfred, 2010), 58.

<sup>31</sup> Carl Czerny, *Piano Forte School, Op. 500* (Vienna: Diabelli & Comp., 1942), Vol I, 161, quoted in Kenneth Drake, *The Sonatas of Beethoven as He Played and Taught Them* (Cincinnati: Music Teachers National Association, 1972), 118.

<sup>32</sup> Behrend, 146.

Ries (1784–1838): “In general he played his compositions very whimsically; nevertheless he usually kept a steady beat and only occasionally pushed the tempo, and even then, seldom. Among other things he held back the tempo in his *crescendo* with a *ritardando*, which made a very beautiful and highly striking effect.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Kenneth Drake, *The Sonatas of Beethoven as He Played and Taught Them* (Cincinnati: Music Teachers National Association, 1972), 54.

#### Section 4: Robert Schumann – Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op.22

Robert Schumann (1810–1856) wrote exclusively for piano from 1829 to 1839.

*Sonata No. 2 in G minor, Op.22* was composed during 1833–1835, and Schumann changed the finale due to a request by Clara, and the new finale *Rondo – Presto* was composed in 1838. The original finale, *Presto Passionato* was published in 1866.<sup>34</sup> The years 1834 and 1835 are significant for Schumann because his relationship with Clara Wieck started to develop during these years, and his love her influenced his writing.<sup>35</sup> It is also during the same years that Schumann met his contemporaries, Chopin and Mendelssohn.<sup>36</sup>

By this time, Schumann was writing sets of character pieces like *Carnaval* Op. 9 and larger, virtuosic works like *Etudes Symphoniques* Op.13. Characteristics of both types are seen in this sonata. Schumann had several sketches of this sonata and its movements. He wrote in a review-essay of 1839 that the G minor Sonata “[runs] its life course . . . this is indeed in the order of things, since we cannot repeat ourselves for centuries, but rather should think about producing what is genuinely new.”<sup>37</sup>

The sonata contains four movements:

- I. *So rasch wie möglich* (as fast as possible)
- II. *Andantino. Getragen*
- III. *Scherzo. Sehr rasch und markiert* (very quickly and marked)
- IV. *Rondo. Presto*

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<sup>34</sup> John Daverio, “Piano Works I: a World of Images,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Julia Perrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 67.

<sup>35</sup> John Daverio and Eric Sams, “Schumann, Robert.” *Grove Music Online*, 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Daverio, “Schumann, Robert.”

<sup>37</sup> John Daverio, “Piano Works I: a World of Images,” 67.

This sonata is noted for its classical sonata structure. However, Schumann's musical personality within is evident: "the composition in fact brims with Florestanian pathos, especially in its concluding *Presto passionato* (later replaced by a far tamer *Rondo*), a veritable encyclopedia of complex rhythmic and metric effects."<sup>38</sup> All movements are in G minor except the second movement in the subdominant key (C major).

The first movement is a dramatic extroverted piece in sonata-allegro form. It opens with a tempo marking of *as fast as possible*. Immediately, the theme that consists of a descending G minor scale portrays the anxious and unstable nature of this sonata with the off-beat tied notes, and accented non-chordal tones. Schumann uses the bridge section (measure 24) to maintain the perturbation with off-beat accents and chromaticism. The secondary key area begins in measure 59 in the median key, B-flat major. While keeping the syncopated rhythm, the shift from the minor to the major creates a moment of peace that lasts for roughly eight measures, until the melody picks up the intensity with left hand's fast figurations. The development starts in measure 93 in the key of F minor. This section has appearances of modified versions of the main opening theme while modulating through various keys: measure 149 in F minor, measure 153 in A-flat major, and measure 165 in G minor. The recapitulation is like the exposition, where the secondary key area is in G-major. At measure 268, the closing section starts with a lush sound consisting of broken diminished chords. Schumann instructs *Schneller* at measure 278 at the double bar, where the key signature indicates a shift from G major to G minor to indicate that the performer builds intensity toward the end of the piece. At measure

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<sup>38</sup> Daverio, "Schumann, Robert."

294, Schumann brings the main theme back marked *Noch schneller*, and brings the piece to a passionate ending.

The second movement, *Andantino*, is “no . . . different from character pieces,” consisting of “slow movements in simple three-part form” followed by a coda.<sup>39</sup> *Getragen* translates literally to the English word “worn.” It is written based on the 1828 lied, *Im Herbste* (In the Autumn), published posthumously edited by Johannes Brahms. Its lyric is a poem about longing to be a source of happiness for the beloved. The main verse is eleven measures long, and Schumann repeats it twice in each part. Each successive section increases in complexity with contrapuntal harmony and a chromatic middle line accompaniment. The second section, starting at measure 22, begins in G minor and has four voices, with the melody in the alto voice. Schumann uses chromaticism, *appoggiatura*, and frequent *ritardando* markings to build up intensity. The third section (measure 38) and the coda (measure 49) returns to the calmness of the opening and is simpler in texture. Schumann quotes this G minor Sonata in the transition to the slow movement in his *Cello Concerto in A Minor, Op. 129* composed in 1850 (more than a decade later)<sup>40</sup>.

The third movement, *Scherzo*, is the shortest movement of the sonata, and is in a rondo form. The main section (A section) occurs at measure 1, measure 21, and measure 53 in the tonic key of G minor. The B section (measure 13) in the mediant key (B-flat major) and the C section (measure 33) in the subdominant key (E-flat major) both have a conversational, and more intimate feel and provide a contrast to the main theme. This

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<sup>39</sup> F. E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short History* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1995), 175.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Kerman, “The Concertos,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Julia Perrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 183.

movement features sequences in sudden dynamic changes, contributing to a lively and mercurial character.

The fourth movement, *Rondo*, is marked *presto* and opens with a melody consisting of broken octaves. The main theme is full of agitation, marked *sf* in the beginning followed by a crescendo. In measure 29, the secondary key area appears in the mediant key (B-flat major), where its theme is a lyrical four bar phrase. Schumann repeats a variation of the four-bar phrase three times, where each time is marked *ritardando* in a different manner before the second theme becomes more complex with overlapping counter melodies. From measure 60, Schumann writes a transitional section full of modulations and syncopations. The return of the A section occurs at measure 132, the B section at measure 159 in E-flat major, and the transition section the second time spends a longer time in the G minor than the first occurrence. The main theme returns for the third and final time at measure 263 with a dominant extension that leads to a deceptive cadence ending on a C-sharp diminished seventh chord (measure 296). Measure 297 marks the beginning of the coda, labeled *Quasi Cadenza* with a tempo marking of *Prestissimo*. The coda is 40 measures long with constant broken diminished chords. This coda brings the entire piece into a frenzied end; the phrases are positioned so that a new harmony starts on the second sixteenth note of the second beat, creating instability and restlessness.

## Section 5: Claude Debussy – Études

*Douze Études*, was written in 1915, Claude Debussy's (1862–1918) last compositional years when he was declining in health, both in body and spirit, due to cancer and the European War.<sup>41</sup> He writes to Robert Godet on January 1st, 1915, “As for music, I confess for months I no longer knew what it was; the familiar sound of the piano had become hateful.”<sup>42</sup> However, during the summer of the same year, Debussy worked from a country house with his second wife, Emma Bardac, in Pourville. It was at this bathing resort near Dieppe with its access to the coast to Sea of the Normandy, that brought back Debussy's creativity despite the fact that he was only sixty miles from the war front. Debussy wrote of the sea: “It has delicacy and some nicely distinguished harmonies . . . if its finery is less dazzling than the Atlantic's it has a greater curiosity value!”<sup>43</sup>

Debussy was proud of the *Études*, as he writes to Durand:

“I have put much love and trust in the future of the Etudes” (28 August)<sup>44</sup>

“I confess that I am pleased to have created a work which – false vanity aside– will occupy a special niche. In point of technique these Etudes will usefully prepare pianists for a better understanding of the fact that the portals of music can only be opened with formidable hands.” (27 September)<sup>45</sup>

The twelve etudes are divided into two groups of six. Volume one is arranged in order of technical focus, and volume two by key and musical coherence. He dedicated the sets to Chopin after considering Couperin as well. The technical coverage of his etudes is

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<sup>41</sup> Paul Roberts, *Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy*, (Portland, Or.: Amadeus Press, 1996), 301.

<sup>42</sup> Letter to Robert Godet, 1 January 1915; Debussy 1987, 295, quoted in Roberts, *Images*, 301.

<sup>43</sup> Letter to Jacques Durand, 5 August 1907; Debussy 1987, 181, quoted in Roberts, *Images*, 301.

<sup>44</sup> Letter to Jacques Durand, 28 August 1915; Debussy 1987, 300, quoted in Roberts, *Images*, 302.

<sup>45</sup> Claude Debussy, *Douze Études*, (Munich: Henle, 1994), iv.

thorough, from five fingers, intervals of thirds, fourths, sixths and octaves, and different tonal keys.

Debussy is playful in his compositions of the *Études*: “I’m sure you’ll agree with me that there’s no need to make technical exercises over-sombre just to appear more serious; a little charm never spoilt anything.”<sup>46</sup> Notably, the set of etudes include no fingerings from Debussy on purpose: “The present *Études* have no fingering – deliberately. . . The absence of fingering is an excellent exercise: it suppresses the spirit of perversity that compels us to abandon the fingering of the composer and vindicates those words of eternal wisdom, ‘If you want something done well, do it yourself.’”<sup>47</sup>

*Douze Études* appeared in print in June 1916 with no premieres, and first partial performances were unnoticed. The work appeared among pianists’ repertoire after the Second World War owing it to Olivier Messiaen who “drew attention to its modernity.”<sup>48</sup>

#### No. 7 Pour les Degrés Chromatiques

The seventh etude is a study of chromaticism. It has a perpetual chromatic motion during the entire piece, and is marked *Scherzando, animato assai*. Its style is compared to Debussy’s chamber works from 1916: *Sonata for Cello and Piano* and *Sonata for Violin and Piano*.<sup>49</sup>

The form of *Étude No. 7 pour les degrés chromatiques* may be considered a theme and variation, sandwiched between an intro and a coda (Fig. 5.1). The theme is

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<sup>46</sup> Roberts, *Images*, 301.

<sup>47</sup> Claude Debussy, *Douze Études*, (Munich: Henle, 1994), 30.

<sup>48</sup> Debussy, *Douze Études*, 29.

<sup>49</sup> Paul Roberts, *Images*, 311.

first found after an introduction, where the motif appears in the left hand (measure 11).

The motif appears throughout in different variations (chordal, octaves, fuller chords, right or left hand, various keys).

	measure	motif	accompaniment
intro	1-10	none	alternating 4 note chromatic 32nd notes between the hands
A	11-24	LH: single line	4 note chromatic 32nd notes in RH
B	25-29	LH: chords in 2nd inversion, starting on D $\flat$ 7	
	30-42	LH: chords in 2nd inversion, starting on A $\flat$ 7	
	43-46	LH: in octaves, starting on A	
C	47-50	LH: thick chords	long chromatic scales spanning over 2 measures
	51-62	LH: thick chords	
B'	63-77	LH: same motivic pattern as m.43	4 note chromatic 32nd notes with octave jumps
coda	78	RH: chords in 2nd inversion	chromatic 32nd notes

Fig. 5.1 *Étude* No. 7 Structure

For each section, the accompaniment is technically challenging and focuses on chromaticism. The continuous fast notes and the fragmented motif are described by Roberts as the following: “humorous character of the music is paramount, though a certain wistfulness in the developing melodic line suggests, perhaps, the sadness of the clown.”<sup>50</sup>

### No. 11 Pour les Arpèges Composés

This *Étude* No. 11 *pour les arpèges composés*, etude for compound arpeggios is often performed and is well-known. According to Roberts, it may be because of “its delicate arpeggio figurations” that makes it similar to nineteenth century piano music.<sup>51</sup> It is marked *dulce e lusingando*, referring to its sound, line, and movement. The melody

<sup>50</sup> Roberts, 311.

<sup>51</sup> Roberts, 314.

requires flexibility while playing in time. The arpeggiated notes need to be played with arm motion like “brush strokes in painting,” to create a soft, rapid, and well-shaped melody.<sup>52</sup>

measure	section	characteristic
1-6	intro	theme a is introduced
7	A	theme b in LH bottom notes
16		theme a appears in LH
25	B	<i>lumineux</i>
27		<i>elegantemente un poco pomposo</i>
29		<i>giocoso</i>
31		<i>scherzando</i>
46-49	transition	
50	A'	A theme
58	closing	brief reminiscence of <i>scherzando</i> from m. 31
62		return to introduction texture

Fig. 5.2 *Étude* No. 11 Structure

This etude is in a rough ABA form (Fig. 5.2). The beginning and the end are labeled *lusingando* (soft and tender), and the arpeggio creates a dream-like atmosphere with a slow lilting melody. The middle section, measures 25–45, is compared by Roberts to an “improvised theater” or a circus.<sup>53</sup> Debussy writes many expressive markings in this B section—*lumineux* (brightly), *elegantemente, un poco pomposo* (elegant and a little pompous) and *giocoso* (playful/joyful) and *scherzando* – over a span of 6 measures. Upon returning to the original feel at measure 50, Debussy expresses his humor by adding a brief appearance of a *scherzando* in *più pp* before the piece disappears in the air.

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<sup>52</sup> Roberts, 314.

<sup>53</sup> Roberts, 314.

## Section 6: Tōru Takemitsu – Rain Tree Sketch II – In Memoriam Olivier Messiaen

Tōru Takemitsu (1930–1996) is a post-World War II Japanese avant-garde instrumental and film composer who received international recognition for his unique style that blends western and traditional Japanese music aesthetics. Mainly self-taught, Takemitsu cites Debussy and Olivier Messiaen as his mentor. Takemitsu's fascination with music started while serving in the military, upon hearing a recording of French chanson, which led to his decision to pursue composition after the war. Six years after the end of WWII in 1951, he also founded "Jikken Kōbō" (Experimental Workshop) with friends who were artists in response to the post-war austerity. They collaborated on mixed-media projects, including electronic sound manipulation. Takemitsu was also a successful film composer, where film gave him a venue to experiment with sound effects that manipulate mood with various sounds, instrumentations and timings. Takemitsu's meeting with John Cage in 1964 inspired him to compose with Japanese instruments, which expanded Takemitsu's harmonic and timbral palette.<sup>54</sup>

Takemitsu's sound is unique because of his manipulation of modal melody, time, and timbre. In an interview with Roger Reynolds, Takemitsu likens orchestration to a garden:

"I am always analogizing [the orchestra] as a garden, . . . What I do is to translate an extremely specific plan of a garden into music. The point is that there are many different "times" 3 in a garden... the movement of vegetation, the "time" of vegetation growing, the fast changes of elements like grass... there are rocks . . . and sand. . . . I'm interested in this sort of transversing of multiple "times," and as much as possible I want to understand the orchestra in this way."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Yoko Narazaki, and Masakata Kanazawa, "Takemitsu, Tōru," *Grove Music Online*, 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Roger Reynolds, and Toru Takemitsu, "Roger Reynolds and Toru Takemitsu: A Conversation," *The Musical Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (1996): 65.

Takemitsu's major source of inspiration was nature and Japanese landscapes. Water is a recurring theme and Takemitsu wrote several pieces that belong to the "waterscape series." Writer Peter Burt says that Takemitsu intended to "create a series of works, which like their subject, pass through various metamorphoses, culminating in a sea of tonality."<sup>56</sup>

*Rain Tree Sketch II – In Memorium Olivier Messiaen*, is a composition from 1992 when Takemitsu's two mentors John Cage and Olivier Messiaen both passed away; Takemitsu was 65 years old. It is the last of Takemitsu's piano solo works belonging to Takemitsu's "waterscape series" compositions. It was composed for a concert "Hommage a Oliver Messiaen" of Les Semaines Musicales internationales d'Orleans, France and was premiered by Alain Neveux on October 24, 1992.

The original *Rain Tree Sketch I* was composed ten years earlier in 1982. The concept of Rain Tree Sketch was based on a short story by Ōe Kenzaburō's "Clever Rain Tree." Ōe, Takemitsu's good friend, was one of Japan's leading post-war writers whose writing was influenced by existentialist philosophy and focused on social and political issues of post-war Japan. In this set of short stories, the Rain Tree is described as a clever tree, due to its ability to retain water from the night rain in its dense set of leaves, and therefore can create its own rain the next day by dripping the retained water whilst other trees are dry.<sup>57</sup> The Rain Tree is used as a metaphor for an energy source of life standing in midst of humanity's violence, sex, life, and death.

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<sup>56</sup> Peter Burt, *The Music of Tōru Takemitsu*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 176.

<sup>57</sup> Kenzaburō Ōe, *The Women Listening to Rain Tree*, (Japan: Shinchosha, 1982).

Takemitsu's piece, *Rain Tree Sketch II* allows for an unlimited imagination with those two aspects in mind. As the last piece of the "waterscape series," Takemitsu creates different tones and pitch using suspension of meter, full or half pedal, and unique harmony to represent water in different stages of the hydrologic cycle, in liquid, solid or gas. The sound may vary between horizontal water movements, such as a flowing river with a melody line, and vertical movements like the rain or evaporation, or its cyclical nature— perhaps by the ABA' form.<sup>58</sup> Differentiating the touch and articulation allows for vast imagery related to water. The second aspect is the darkness of its literary source, Ōe's "Clever Rain Tree," reminding the performer and audience to not limit their nature-themed imagination to being optimistic and serene, but to also to allow for reality, at times twisted and occasionally grotesque.

*Rain Tree Sketch II* is in ABA' form, where A introduces two fragment-like themes followed by a transition, a contrasting B section, and A' that repeats the first half of the A section. Several unique features include lack of a time signature, alternation of two tempi markings throughout the piece, detailed pedal markings, and lack of a bass line. The first three features contribute to Takemitsu's signature compositional style, and the Japanese traditional concept of *Ma*. *Ma*, directly translates to space or interval, and is a central concept that drives Takemitsu's aesthetic sense: "*Ma* is not only a concept in time; it is at the same time the very spatial, a spatial thing, I believe. *Ma* is perhaps . . . oh, *ma* is a very philosophical term."<sup>59</sup> The Japanese aesthetic uses the concept of *Ma* to organize matter within a given space, such as in gardening as previously mentioned.

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<sup>58</sup> Burt, *The Music of Tōru Takemitsu*, 176.

<sup>59</sup> Toru Takemitsu (with Tania Cronin and Hilary Tann), 'Afterward,' *Perspectives of New Music* 27/2 (1989), 207, quoted in Peter Burt, *The Music of Tōru Takemitsu*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 212.

Takemitsu takes this concept and applies it to music, and experiments with timber of the sound to “shade . . . silence.”<sup>60</sup> The spastic pitch motifs, and “disjunctive lines” overlap in an improvisatory and delicate manner, creating a unique ambience with reminiscence of both Debussy and Messiaen.<sup>61</sup>

Takemitsu specifies two tempi in this piece, Tempo I (measure 1) marked *Celestially Light* for the first theme, and Tempo II (measure 10) marked *Poco meno mosso* for the second theme. Immediately following the introduction of the two thematic material, the development section (measures 13–19) alternates each measure between the two different tempi. This simultaneity of tempi is an influence of *Noh* music, traditional Japanese dance theatre from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It gives an improvisatory, dynamic and conversational effect to the flow of the music. Lastly, *Rain Tree Sketch II* consists of mainly high notes, and the only bass notes are D-flat pedal tones, marked *pp* or *ppp*. This may also be an influence from *Noh* music, which also consists of higher register instruments. It allows the piece to create a surreal atmosphere as if walking on a mystic land surrounded by mist.

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<sup>60</sup> Burt, *The Music of Tōru Takemitsu*, 237.

<sup>61</sup> Maurice Hinson, *Music for Piano and Orchestra: An Annotated Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 284.

## Section 7: Frédéric Chopin – Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21

Polish composer Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) wrote his piano concerto, Op. 21 between 1829–30 at age 19, before his first concerto which was written at age 21. It was dedicated to countess Delphina Potocka. The concerto consists of three movements and is described by Maurice Hinson: “Writing for the piano is superb: florid, yet distinguished by brilliance and poetry . . . both works represent an uneasy effort to confine a new and revolutionary technique with the limits of the Classical mold.”<sup>62</sup> The three movements are as follows:

- I. *Maestoso*
- II. *Larghetto*
- III. *Finale – Allegro vivace*

Early nineteenth century piano concertos are characterized by keyboard virtuosity, and a minimized orchestra roll due to practical reasons: “. . . as they had to be performable as solos or with quartet or quintet accompaniment.”<sup>63</sup> The form of this Chopin concerto is based on Carl Czerny’s model, which consists of four tutti sections with three piano solos.

Chopin’s two concertos contributed to about half of Chopin’s less than two dozen public performances through his career as a pianist.<sup>64</sup> The second concerto was premiered on March 17, 1830 in Warsaw. Chopin writes in his letter to Tytus Sylwester Woyciechowski, Chopin's friend and a patron of art, that the first movement did not

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<sup>62</sup> Maurice Hinson. *Music for Piano and Orchestra: An Annotated Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 65.

<sup>63</sup> John Rink, *Chopin, the Piano Concertos, Cambridge Music Handbooks*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.

<sup>64</sup> Rink, *Chopin, the Piano Concertos*, 14.

impress the general public as much as expected, while the latter two movements were well received: “The *Adagio* and *Rondo* produced the greatest effect and exclamations of sincere admiration could be heard.”<sup>65</sup> Franz Liszt wrote of the *Larghetto*, “*Adagio [sic]* of the second *Concerto*, for which he had a marked predilection and which he liked to play frequently.”<sup>66</sup>

Chopin was influenced by Italian opera and tied together *bel-canto* style to his piano writing. The lush lyricism that is prominent throughout the first and second movement has several features that Michalowsky compares to operatic aria: “Much of his ornamentation was transparently vocal in origin, stylizing the portamentos, fioriture and cadenzas which were part of the singer’s art. Likewise his tendency to sweeten the melody with parallel 3rds and 6ths is strongly reminiscent of operatic duet textures.”<sup>67</sup>

In the first movement, the piano starts its solo at measure 71 with arpeggiated G-diminished seventh chords as a four-measure introduction before the main theme at measure 75. The main melody is a four measure long lyrical line around a F minor descending scale where the dotted rhythm gives a solemn, declaratory march-like feel. The secondary key area starts in measure 125 in the mediant key, A-flat major. Chopin instructs this theme to be played *con anima* (soulfully); it is a beautiful contrast to the first theme with its nocturne like features with *leggiere* ornaments. Following the second orchestral tutti is the development section (measure 205). The development starts in the key of A-flat major featuring a lyrical duet with the orchestra, but soon picks up

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<sup>65</sup> William G. Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw*, (New York, 1987), 207, quoted in Rink, *Chopin, the Piano Concertos*, 16.

<sup>66</sup> Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 67.

<sup>67</sup> Kornel Michałowski, and Jim Samson, "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek," *Grove Music Online*, 2001.

momentum into the F minor section, where the piano accompanies the orchestra's theme, which is related to the primary theme with arpeggiated figurations. Chopin uses circle of fifths modulations to travel through various related keys while building intensity until the development ends with the piano's descending thirds over the orchestra's tremolo (measure 256). The third and the final piano solo starts on measure 268 and is similar to the first solo with one exception. Immediately after the first theme opens the solo for four measures, the music jumps seamlessly to the theme of the secondary key area. Because of the surprising and immediate shift from the F minor to A-flat major, the second appearance of the A-flat section may be played slower than the first.

The second movement can be described as a nocturne in AABA form. The main feature of this beautiful movement is the timelessness created by long lyrical lines, ornamentations, and the dramatic middle section. The orchestra starts the piece with a gentle and quiet introduction before the soloist enters with broken A-flat major chord (measure 6). The A section is nineteen measures long, and the primary theme is six measures long followed by a nine-measure answer. Chopin decorates the melodic line with melismatic ornamentations to add expression and variety to main theme. The second appearance of A is in measure 26, and the third in measure 75. Each section is decorated differently with long melismatic and virtuosic runs to create appropriate effects: slight disturbance for the second, and resolved and peaceful for the third. The middle section, starting at measure 42 is a soliloquy. The key changes suddenly to the parallel minor (A-flat minor), the orchestra plays tremolos while the soloist plays phrases in unison with both hands.

The third movement is a rondo with mazurka-like characteristics, and shows pianistic brilliance, an influence of Hummel.<sup>68</sup> The piano opens the movement as a graceful waltz in F minor with an aura of poignance. Chopin places appoggiaturas and high notes on the second beat displacing the sense of the main beats. This style is common in Chopin's early compositions and reflects the popular trend of Polish piano composition of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, which revolved around the polonaise and 'heroic'-style works.<sup>69</sup> The second section, following the first orchestral tutti shows another influence from the polonaise—the virtuosity, namely fast and modulating arpeggio work, and large leaps (measure 65). Despite the fast speed of the notes, Chopin creates a delightful *leggieramente* section by giving a flowing main melody in the orchestra for the piano to accompany, and by transposing it in four different keys to liven the music. New themes are introduced in this middle section (measure 145), and like the opening theme, place an emphasis on the second beats. The themes of this piece use many triplet figures, which promotes an exuberant burst of sounds. The coda of this piece, which starts with a horn call from an orchestra, represents a culmination of excitement (measure 406). Highly virtuosic and marked *brillante*, the piano part plays perpetual, yet lyrical, triplet lines with the aid of long harmonic lines from the orchestra. Many of the notes are played in the high register giving a splash of sparkles to celebrate the piece to its end.

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<sup>68</sup> Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*, 66.

<sup>69</sup> Kornel Michałowski, and Jim Samson, "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek," *Grove Music Online*, 2001.

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## Appendix A: Graduate Solo Recital Program

The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I.....Johann Sebastian Bach  
Prelude and Fugue in B-flat minor, BWV 867 (1685–1750)

Sonata No. 17 in B-flat major, K. 570.....Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
I. Allegro (1756–1791)  
II. Adagio  
III. Allegretto

Sonata in E minor, Op. 90.....Ludwig van Beethoven  
I. Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck (1770–1827)  
II. Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen

- INTERMISSION -

Études ..... Claude Debussy  
No. 11 pour les arpèges composés (1862–1918)  
No. 7 pour les degrés chromatiques

Rain Tree Sketch.....Toru Takemitsu  
II – In Memoriam Olivier Messiaen (1930–1996)

Sonata No.2 in G minor, Op.22..... Robert Schumann  
I. So rasch wie möglich (1810 – 1856)  
II. Andantino. Getragen  
III. Scherzo. Sehr rasch und markiert  
IV. Rondo. Presto

## Appendix B: Concerto Recital Program

- Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21 ..... Frédéric Chopin  
I. Maestoso (1810 – 1849)  
II. Larghetto  
III. Allegro Vivace