

SCHUBERT IN CONTEXT: THE EARLY-NINETEENTH-CENTURY REVOLUTION IN
VIOLIN VIRTUOSITY AND SCHUBERT'S FANTASY IN C MAJOR FOR VIOLIN AND
PIANO, OP. POSTHUMOUS 159, D.934

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저를 낳아주시고 30 년 넘도록
제게 가장 훌륭한 스승이자 친구가 되어주신
제 부모님께 이 논문을 바칩니다.

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INTRODUCTION

Vienna in 1828 was a pivotal time and a place in the history of violin playing and subsequently, of Western music. It was the year during which virtuoso music of Franz Schubert and Niccolò Paganini was presented to the Viennese audience and received opposite reactions. It has been recorded that when Schubert's Fantasy in C Major for Violin and Piano, D. 934 was premiered in January, the hall gradually emptied as the majority of the listeners walked out of the hall before the piece was finished.¹ Two months later, Niccolò Paganini arrived at Vienna. It was the departure point of his European concert tour. For his Viennese debut, Paganini played his then most recently completed concerto (No. 2 in B minor) as well as his *Sonata Militaire*, played on the G-string alone, and lastly his own set of variations based on a theme from Gioacchino Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. Paganini dazzled the Viennese audiences with his technical prowess, instantly invoking huge uproar. Paganini's sensational reception resulted in an extension of what was to be a passing visit of six concerts into a four-month season of fourteen concerts. Ivry Gitlis, an Israeli virtuoso of the twentieth century, believed that Paganini was not a part of the development in the history of violin playing in a sense that there were his predecessors leading up to him and followers who further improved on what he achieved. Rather, he was an individualized phenomenon that revolutionized violin playing so that one can simply divide the history into two: the time before him and after him.² The violinist Josef Slavik, who premiered Schubert's Violin Fantasy, was making a name for himself in Vienna as an up-and-coming virtuoso around the time of Paganini's arrival. But it is not hard to imagine that Slavik's

¹ Elizabeth Norman McKay, *Franz Schubert: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 300.

² *The Art of Violin*. 1st edition. DVD-ROM, NVC Arts: A Warner Music Group Company, 2001.

impressive technique was thoroughly overshadowed by Paganini in 1828. However, the critiques on the poorly received Fantasy indicate that it was not a matter of presentation, but a matter of compositional failure. These were some of the reviews that followed the premiere:

Herr Franz Schubert's Fantasia for Pianoforte and Violin... occupies rather too much of the time that the Viennese are prepared to devote to their aesthetic pleasures.³

...positively miscomposed...A new fantasia...made no appeal of any sort. It would be a fair judgment to say that the popular composer has frankly gone off the rail here.⁴

One of the composer's least important compositions, if not positively objectionable.⁵

Schubert scholar Maurice J. E. Brown shared his view on the Fantasy as the following:

A full scale work, containing much virtuoso writing for both instruments. But like the "Rondeau Brillante" it fails to reconcile the claims of such technical display with those of his own genius. All four sections promise well at the start: the emotional undertones, the poised themes, the exalted atmosphere; but all too soon the rich embroidery begins and the music grows turgid.⁶

On the other hand, Paganini's debut just two months after the Fantasy's premiere, generated a wave of enthusiastic reviews.

This artist handles his instrument according to rules that are his own, and for this reason his achievements remain inexplicable to violinists of even the first rank...⁷

When a new star appears in a trajectory, of which one can divine neither the chord nor the radius, the keenest observer can offer mere conjectures. If one speaks of

³ An unspecified correspondent of "Der Sammler" (February 7 1828), quoted in Alfred Einstein, *A Musical Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 276.

⁴ An anonymous reviewer of "Leipziger Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung" (April 2 1828), quoted in Alfred Einstein, *A Musical Portrait* (New York: Oxford Press, 1951), 276.

⁵ Kreissle von Hellborn, quoted in Gerald Abraham, *The Music of Schubert* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1947), 101.

⁶ Maurice J. E. Brown, *Schubert: A Critical Biography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958), 270.

⁷ Leslie Sheppard and Herbert Axelrod, *Paganini* (Neptune City: Paganiniana Publications, 1979), 246.

inconceivable difficulties, which are executed as easily as the simplest air; of miracles of double-stopping, harmonics, incredible staccato performed in the most rapid tempo, yet with the most perfect tranquility; if one says that in his hands the violin transcends the most moving human voice, that his ardent soul kindles the vital flame in every heart, that every note is pure and perfect, that every singer could learn from him everything he needs to know, it all amounts to nothing. It is only a gleam from the glittering mirror of his playing. He must be heard and heard again, to be believed.⁸

At the first stroke of the bow on his Guarnerius, one might almost say at the first step he took into the hall, his reputation was decided in Germany. Kindled by an electric flash, he suddenly shone and sparkled like a miraculous apparition in the domain of art.⁹

It must be drawn to our attention that the reviews for Paganini's concert as represented by the above comments are completely devoid of the musical content of the works performed. There is hardly a record of criticism following Paganini's concerts in Vienna in which compositional craft is evaluated to the extent addressed upon Schubert's Fantasy. Paganini's technical wizardry and his unusual stage presence were the key factors in his success. Consequently, all the reports and praises were directed at the sheer display of virtuosity. Such reviews seem to indicate that the Viennese in 1828 were mesmerized by the sheer display that they did not care to comment on the content of his music. It is evident that when the virtuosic rendition of Schubert's *Sei mir gegrüsst* was heard in the Fantasy as theme and variations, critics questioned the meaning of such technical display and how it functions in the bigger scheme of Schubert's musical expression. When Paganini's violin concerto and his variations were presented to the same audience of Vienna, no such questions arose as they glorified the performer's exceptional ability to put on a show. To the Viennese audience and critics, virtuosity in Schubert's music had to serve a greater purpose to prove its aesthetic worth when virtuosity of Paganini was praiseworthy for its own

⁸ An anonymous reviewer of *Theaterzeitung* (April 4, 1828), quoted in Renée de Saussine, *Paganini* trans. Marjorie Laurie (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1954), 94.

⁹ Gustav Schilling, quoted in Stephen Stratton, *Niccolò Paganini: His Life and Work* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1907), 35.

sake without having to communicate any structural or theoretical meaning. In a sense, Paganini's virtuosity was self-sufficient in its aesthetic worth.

The reviews provide us with a critical insight regarding the prevailing musical trend in Vienna in 1828. One of Franz Schubert's closest friends, the playwright Eduard von Bauernfeld later recollected that, "During the last year of Schubert's life, Paganini gave eight concerts in Vienna and received in a few weeks the same sum as Schubert earned by all his work. Verily, the favors of music were distributed with a strange sense of justice..."¹⁰ Bauernfeld's recollection begs to further explore this "strange sense of justice" with which two sorts of virtuoso violin music in 1828 Vienna were on the one hand embraced with infatuation and on the other hand neglected in disapproval.

Revisiting the history of Viennese musical scene at the beginning of the nineteenth century and its progress leading up to the year of 1828 will help us to better understand the motives behind Schubert's virtuoso music. With an understanding of Schubert's musical language in historical context, I will then reassess the virtuoso code in the music of Schubert in juxtaposition with that of Paganini. In addition to theoretical analysis, I will present an approach from a performer's perspective to Schubert's Violin Fantasy and hope to generate a new insight into understanding the virtuosity in the Fantasy and thus the aesthetic value of the work as a whole.

¹⁰ Sheppard and Axelrod, 250.

CHAPTER ONE

SCHUBERT IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Schubert in a Time of Change

Franz Schubert's music never witnessed a large public success nor did he accumulate a fortune anywhere near the realm of Paganini's lucrative career. Nonetheless, it is hardly a controversial statement that Schubert was a musical genius worthy of the title "the Viennese successor to Beethoven". By examining Schubert's music in its political, social, and economic context, we can better understand the reasons behind his underrated career and ultimately, helping to clarify the meaning of virtuosity in his musical language.

With the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 followed by the Napoleonic wars and the Congress of Vienna taking place in 1814, the early part of the nineteenth century in Vienna was a time of significant reforms not only in political and economic spheres but also in cultural and domestic trends. At the heart of revolutionary spirit, freedom of individual and nation was asserted against old customs and privileges. Thus, societies went through substantial transformations as aristocratic and religious privileges evaporated. In the world of music and its composers, the change meant, among others, the decline of musical patronage that had persisted for centuries. Although the Congress of Vienna had hoped to reinstall, to a certain extent, the status quo ante, it could not restore the huge aristocratic wealth that once made the artistic achievements possible but now substantially ceased.¹¹ While Beethoven still enjoyed musical patronage well into his middle period, Schubert, whose life was contemporary with the second

¹¹ Henry Reynor, *Music and Society Since 1815* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 1.

half of Beethoven's, never experienced the kind of financial support provided by wealthy patrons.

Through the Congress of Vienna, post-revolutionary Europe witnessed secularization of ecclesiastical states and the absorption of over a hundred minor German states into their larger neighbors. Many minor kingdoms and dukedoms had lost their own musical organizations from such readjustment, and it left many court musicians unemployed. At the same time however, the evaporation of ecclesiastical and aristocratic privileges generated a hopeful byproduct for musicians: the democratization of music. With the rapid growth of bourgeoisie during the post-war era, there were more demands by amateurs for musical instruction. Thus the decline of aristocratic wealth and the secularization forced many church and court musicians to be unemployed, but in turn teaching had become the alternative for many of them had they wished to pursue such option.

Opera and Schubert

The all-powerful patrons of pre-revolutionary Europe had built their own orchestras and opera houses to cater to their individual taste. Without a big fortune however, patrons had to depend on paying audiences to augment the subsidies in order to pay large orchestras now of Beethovenian scale as well as opera productions. The subsidies for the aristocratic decadence once provided by noble patrons now came directly from taxation or indirectly from civil list payments to a ruler.¹² Consequently, once privately operated orchestras and opera houses now began to become state or national musical organizations. The decline of court patronage and the rapid growth of the bourgeoisie meant music was more accessible to the public and thus the taste and preference of

¹² Ibid.

public audiences became important. The genre in direct relation to this change in the demography of audience base was opera as it was the traditional center of musical life in many European cities.

As opera became more dependent on the general public, opera houses became another venue, like universities, for potential insinuation of seditious messages unto the masses. In the minds of political rulers such as King Friedrich I, Count Sedlnitzky and Prince Metternich, staged music was a medium through which undesirable – from their monarchic point of view – sentiments and ideas would be invoked within its viewers. Therefore, while the opera houses were dependent on the sale of seats to the general public for their economic maintenance, the system of government within remained similar to its pre-revolutionary conditions. Although political messages were exposed through socially oriented opera of the pre-revolution period such as Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, the growing exposure of opera in the monarchy of German and Austrian government made strict censorship inevitable.

[T]he aim of the authorities was to preserve and consolidate their restored power, ruling on eighteenth-century lines through nineteenth-century instruments of coercion. Anything that questioned official established policy was to be suppressed as prejudicial to religion, morality or good order. The composer's appeal to the public was not allowed to step outside narrowly drawn limits of what was politically and socially acceptable to an old regime conscious of the fundamental dangers of its position.¹³

Censorship certainly restricted the imaginative expression of the opera composers. Among the composers who first-handedly suffered political repression for their music were Beethoven and Schubert.¹⁴ Of the two works written by Schubert in 1823, *Fierrebras* and *Die Verschworenen*, the latter became problematic because of the title 'The Conspirators' suggestive of its dangerous

¹³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁴ Schubert's earlier operas before 1823, often Mozartian in their gestures, did not get produced, and Beethoven's *Leonore* (1805,1806) witnessed greater success later in 1814 as *Fidelio*.

political theme. The sketch of his last opera *Der Graf von Gleichen* of 1828 was abandoned because the censors objected to its libretto.

However, political censorship was not the only reason behind Schubert's failure in the genre. Because the opera house business was no longer dependent on an all-powerful patron, composers who were already established in the field had the upper hand against any newcomers that were threatening to become dangerous rivals.¹⁵ The only opera by Schubert that brought reasonable success was the one-act Singspiel *Die Zwillingsbrüder* (The Twin Brothers, D. 647). With Vogl's effort¹⁶ to secure the commission for Schubert, it was requested by the Kärntnerthor Theater of Vienna in 1818. However, before it could enjoy a modest success, the work was kept unproduced for eighteen months under the precaution of Joseph Weigl, the *Kapellmeister* of the Theater. At the time Weigl's own production, *Die Schweizerfamilie* was a huge hit among the audiences and his influence in the theater was simply unassailable. As a composer and the conductor of the Theater, Weigl was in no way interested in encouraging young newcomers to undermine his popularity. When Schubert's *Die Zwillingsbrüder* finally got its chance to be produced and brought in some success from six of its performances, the opera management requested the composer for some less profiled tasks: an aria and a duet for an opera¹⁷ written by a French composer, Ferdinand Hérold and an incidental music for a play¹⁸ by a German playwright, Helmina von Chézy. While Hérold's French production was successful in its own

¹⁵ Raynor, 18.

¹⁶ Johann Michael Vogl was a prominent bass-baritone in Austria who introduced many of Schubert's songs to the Viennese public.

¹⁷ *La Clochette* (The Magic Bells, 1817) was produced in Vienna with the German title, *Das Zauberglöckchen*.

¹⁸ *Rosamunde* (1823) for which Schubert wrote an overture and ten numbers, the main theme from the third Entr'acte in B \flat major was later reused for the second movement of his string quartet in A minor, D. 804 and again, with some modification, in his Impromptu in B \flat , Op. 142 (D. 935), No. 3.

right, *Rosamunde* failed to capture the interest of the audience. In the mean time Schubert, in 1822, received another commission for which he wrote *Alfonso und Estrella*.¹⁹ The work however was never produced and Schubert never heard it during his lifetime. Despite Schubert's innate gift of setting words to music and his sensitivity to palettes of orchestral colors, critics blamed the lack of action and poorly paced drama for its failure. The *Fierrabras* of 1823 was set to a libretto by Joseph Kupelwieser, the general manager of the Kärntnerthor Theater. The opera was advertised as the forthcoming attraction, but before the production was due, Kupelwieser left his position and the hopes of its realization took off as well. Nonetheless, the modest success from his *Die Zwillingbrüder* must have given him some hope for a post as composer/conductor at the Imperial Opera in Vienna. Although his application was supported by rather impressive testimonials from established musicians and *Kapellmeisters* including his former teacher Salieri and Weigl, Schubert was only offered a work as a vocal coach. This could have opened doors to a more substantial apprenticeship in the field, but he exhibited no sense of punctuality apparently and was paid no more than once for coaching a female singer for her role in Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*. While he could be productive and industrious, Schubert was an artist in his own freedom for whom the concept of daily punctuality and mechanical pattern was vexatious. As a result, his casual attitude cost him what came to be his only chance of employment in the field. Schubert's free spirited nature was already evident from his pre-opera years in 1816 when he worked briefly as a schoolmaster. Although Schubert had a good basis for a career in teaching (his father being a schoolmaster himself), but teaching youth under a fixed curriculum was a profession, as Schubert found out, the least congenial with his personality.

¹⁹ It was set to a German libretto by Franz von Schober, a confidant of Schubert's.

When opera was once an entertainment designed for monarchs and their courtiers, public taste mattered little to the *Kapellmeisters*.²⁰ But when these court theaters lost the wealth of their aristocrats and began to augment the subsidies from the ticket sales for the general public, it virtually terminated the role of the traditional *Kapellmeister* of the pre-revolutionary era. If the eighteenth-century *Kapellmeister* was the “all-round composer who could provide music whenever it was needed for church and opera house”, what the post-war system needed was instead a conductor with excellent executive and administrative skills in place of his creative gifts, to attract public attention and increase ticket sales.²¹ Schubert, unlike Beethoven, was as un-political as a musician of the early nineteenth century Europe could be. He was shy and retiring in front of unfamiliar masses and never a charismatic public persona. Schubert’s lack of tactful social grace and public affair skills had kept him relatively uncontroversial in the eyes of his political overlords. But such traits caused his social network to be rather limited and surely did not benefit his career as a composer in the time of political readjustments and cultural reform. Besides the financial destitution, Schubert’s awareness of the need for a change in his way of addressing his art to the public gave him some incentive to search for a public position. But Schubert certainly did not fit in to this new kind of *Kapellmeister* in demand at the time and in fact he never held a significant official post during his life.

A close observation of the socio-political context of the early nineteenth century Vienna delineates reasons behind Schubert’s unsuccessful career as a composer. The decline of aristocratic patronage, political censorship of the monarchy, and the power play in the opera houses were the post-revolutionary conditions collectively imposed upon musician including Schubert in German-speaking Europe at the time. It was undoubtedly a time in which a composer

²⁰ This excludes Italian theaters where the public support had been financially necessary.

²¹ Raynor, 15.

was left without a social function and the kind of audience with whom to truly communicate.²² Nonetheless, post-revolutionary Europe offered other outlets for a composer to make his living and to build a career. Some of the most notable contemporaries of Schubert's such as Louis Spohr and Carl Maria von Weber began as concert artists on the violin and piano, respectively before embarking on their career as *Kapellmeisters*. Although the careers of Spohr and Weber were established upon their performing abilities, they adapted themselves to the new circumstance by capitalizing on their administrative talents rather than their performance and compositional inclinations. Raynor's assessment of the early nineteenth century composer and his loss of artistic identity speaks more truth when it is addressed to Schubert for whom conformity in his expression was hardly an option. When musical instruction for the growing bourgeoisie surged as a lucrative market, Schubert did not choose to embrace the path wholly. His private and scarcely political persona did not amount to any tangible success in his operatic endeavor nor in his efforts to land a *Kapellmeister* post. Certainly, it would be misleading to state that Schubert's career was unsuccessful based just on his financial achievement alone. But without a doubt, his personal attributes limited his reputation as a composer within selected number of minor aristocracy and upper bourgeoisie of Vienna. More importantly, they limited awareness of his impressively extensive musical oeuvre to a little less than two hundred songs, a few chamber works and less than a dozen piano pieces. The administrative and public affair skill finessed by Spohr and Weber was something that Schubert was not born with. Although it would be hardly disputable that their aesthetic prowess and compositional output were no greater than those of Schubert, they possessed other such qualities that enabled them to have a successful career at the time of socio-political readjustments and cultural reforms.

²² Raynor, 15.

In the pre-revolution times, the central purpose of music was to either glorify god or to serve as an aesthetic pastime for the old nobilities. Beethoven emerged in the latter part of the eighteenth century as the pioneer who single-handedly overturned the old idea of a musician's subservient role in society. He sought to present his music with as having intrinsic value. This is not to say that Beethoven's music never served any other purpose but his own vision as he too was a beneficiary of the musical patronage in the old custom and his opinionated outlook in politics produced music of celebration at times.

From political censorship to democratization of music, the early nineteenth-century Europe witnessed shifts, changes, and reforms in various aspects of the lives of its people and its musicians. Post-revolution and post-war circumstance generated conditions by which the social function of a musician also changed drastically. The ramification of the revolution and Napoleonic wars delineated the need for changes not only in the ways a musician could build a successful career but also in the kind of music he was pressed to write. Now that music was accessible not only to the privileged but to wider and larger demography, the musical trend was to be shaped by its largest audience class, the one of growing bourgeoisie. Subsequently, a composer was to adhere to the taste of his new audience if he dreamed of gaining any significant fame and recognition. Opera houses demanded a new kind of financially savvy Kapellmeister instead of a creative artist with musical integrity. It was becoming more of a business-oriented industry targeting the general public being as the main market. Thus, commercialization of music was surfacing at these larger venues.

Schubert during Biedermeier Vienna in the 1820s

One of the most noteworthy outcomes of the revolution and wars in France was the newly empowered bourgeoisie. The revolutionary uproar of the middle classes against old customs and privileges of the nobilities had ended the monopolized privileges of the previous regime. This new bourgeoisie “gradually came to impose its way of life and its view of the world upon society, as the influence of the old nobility waned and as monarchies began slowly to disappear.”²³ Unlike in France, this upsurge of lower classes was accomplished without any violent revolution in Austria. The middle classes in Vienna proved to be more crucial than other countries affected by the revolution in that they practically possessed the key to the country’s future economy. The Viennese bourgeoisie truly blossomed and became heavily influential that the leading figures of science and philosophy, once dominated by the aristocracy, now birthed out of the middle classes. These newly empowered members of the Viennese society were the dominating component that gave way to the period characterized as *Biedermeier*.²⁴ The culture of Biedermeier Vienna then provides the foundation for our understanding of the early nineteenth-century virtuosity and Schubert’s place in it.

The deprivation and inflation of post Napoleonic-war era had people yearning for a life that is safe and stable and the kinds of music that are light-hearted and sensual without serious messages. Theatrical music for the larger public, by its nature, was much more prone to political censorship. On the other hand, music and music making in smaller gatherings among amateurs were just right for the Viennese seeking peace and leisurely entertainment in uncontroversial settings. It is no coincidence that waltz, with its innocent grace and charm, truly came into fashion in Vienna around the time of the Congress in 1815. “Cozy domesticity seemed to them to

²³ Charles Osborne, *Schubert and His Vienna* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1985), 137.

²⁴ Bieder [plain] meier [common last name]: implying an age of plain lifestyle.

be preferable to adventurousness and good humor more important than deep thought”.²⁵ This age of comfortable coziness in Vienna under Metternich’s regime represents the time particularly from 1815 until 1848 of the European revolution. Walter Pollak’s summary encapsulates the character of this age:

Under the cloud of the Metternich system, there blossomed with the Biedermeier one of the most charming and sensitive epochs. It is hardly an exaggeration to describe this rich intellectual and artistic development as the consequence and result of a kind of ‘inward immigration’. People, given no say in matters political, barred from all participation in public affairs and the shaping of social conditions, withdrew from onward concerns into the intimate circle of the family and friendly relations with their fellow creatures. The harmless, gay parlor game, the sentimental literary salon, the cultivation of music at home: these formed the basis of a widely ramified, deeply rooted cultural life.²⁶

In Biedermeier Vienna, the waltzes of Strauss Jr. and Lanner flourished while *Ländler* and *Kontretänze* were enjoyed widely by both the nobilities and the bourgeoisie.

The post-war depression triggered hopeful longing for a life free of any concerns that had been so taxing not only financially but physically and emotionally as well. Poverty-stricken war times adding to the long suppressed discontent among the middle classes of the old regime were now manifesting in a form of compensatory comfort and untroubled leisure. Of many aristocratic privileges of the old regime, music came to be one the most representative exponents of the newly empowered bourgeoisie in Biedermeier Vienna. Rightly so, Vienna had retained its reputation as the musical capital where hopeful composers flocked to test their newest works with its culturally sophisticated audience. However, when music became no longer the prerogative of the aristocracy, Viennese bourgeoisie sought to find comfort in kinds of music

²⁵ Osborne, 133.

²⁶ Walter Pollak, quoted in Charles Osborne, *Schubert and His Vienna* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1985), 138.

that were simple, easily accessible and free of serious political connotations and potentially controversial messages.

The democratization of music encouraged many “less-serious” genres to flourish among the bourgeoisie. However, it was only a matter of time until the popular trend in Viennese musical society became devoid of aesthetic substance because of its pleasure-seeking citizens. The musical trend shaped by such an audience is captured in Putz’s description in regards to Schubert’s music as the following:

Around the year 1820 Schubert’s music was intelligible only to music-lovers who took an active interest in the output of contemporary composers. Publishers tended to shy away from the commercial risks of printing the music he was composing at the time – long, involved, introspective piano sonatas, andantes and allegros, marches and, some years later, impromptus and moment musicaux. The prevailing taste was altogether more trivial: caprices, rondos with variations, showy fantasias, tarantellas, minuets and arrangements of popular operatic melodies.²⁷

Mark W. Rowe’s account of Biedermeier Vienna in regards to Beethoven’s music depicts the superficiality in Viennese musical taste.

Many of [Beethoven’s] patrons had died or gone bankrupt by the 1820s, and the revolutionary message of freedom in the ninth symphony, or the religious emotions of the *Missa Solemnis* found little sympathy amongst the jaded, reactionary and pleasure-loving Viennese.²⁸

The beginning of Biedermeier life style in post-war Vienna coincides with the rise of the middle classes and it is also about the time in Schubert’s life (1816) when he contemplated deserting his job as a schoolteacher and proposed to make a living as a freelance composer. The trend of domesticity in music surely favored Schubert in winning himself, although limited within small circles of upper bourgeoisie and minor aristocracy in Vienna, considerable fame and

²⁷ Franz Putz. *Schubert 1797-1828* trans. Paul Catty (Vienna: Federal Press Service, 1997), 53.

²⁸ Mark. W. Rowe, *Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst: Virtuoso Violinist* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 30.

recognition throughout his life. He was, in all certainty, a composer par excellence of writing music for more intimate gatherings. However it was amongst the few true connoisseurs consisting of the composer's close friends where Schubert's charming and sometimes intensely introverted *Lieder* and *Kammermusik* seemed to truly shine. Evidently, such music of depth was not the popular trend among the reactionary Viennese public infatuated with anything sensual, exotic and easily stimulating without the complication of deep thoughts. As John Reed relates in his evaluation, one would be grossly mistaken "to assume that the tastes and values of the Schubert circle were typical of Vienna as a whole".²⁹

Referring back to the quote from Franz Putz regarding the prevailing taste of music in 1820s Vienna, "popular operatic melodies" refers strictly to Italian imports in Germany and Austria where people were Rossini-mad ever since his *L'inganno felice* was first introduced in Kärntnertor Theater back in 1816.³⁰ With one exception³¹ of Weber's *Der Freischütz* (premiered in Berlin in the summer 1821 then later in Vienna), popular operas in German speaking regions were predominantly Italian. In the same year of the enthusiastic success of Weber's German production, the two main theaters in Vienna, *Theater am Kärntnertor* and the *Theater an der Wien* were both run by an Italian impresario, Domenico Barbaja, who had been closely tied to Rossini's success. Interestingly, Barbaja made great effort to encourage German opera by which Schubert sought to realize his own hope, but the seasons were dominated by overwhelming demand for Italian operas. The conflict between the supporters of Rossini and the Italian operas and much smaller number of supporters behind Weber and German operas reflects the Parisian

²⁹ John Reed, *Schubert: The Final Years* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1972), 108.

³⁰ Prince Metternich's vigorous censorship over operatic endeavors within his jurisdiction hindered the development of German opera, that is, an opera written and sung in German language and constructed in German style.

³¹ The success of *Schweizerfamilie* (1808) by an Austrian composer Josef Weigl, although gradually diminishing, technically was an achievement from a pre-censorship period.

conflict between Gluck and Piccinni of the preceding century.³² This is no surprise because with opera in German speaking regions, the focus was on preserving political agendas rather than allowing the freedom of expression in art in its organic form. Thus during the early nineteenth century, German opera production in cities under political censorship such as Vienna suffered from sub-par production quality until years later when Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* arrived at the scene to revolutionize the art form. A young British organist and critic Edward Holmes recalls his impression of the state of German music during his visits to Munich and Vienna in 1827:

German opera is not much patronized by the Viennese, who doat upon these things which are foreign and despise their own good writers. Both the Italian and German operas are played at the same house; but the latter is considered by the public as a mere foil to the former, and by the managers as a mere stop-gap.³³

Unfortunately, Holmes failed to encounter Schubert and his music during his visit and thus returned wholly unaware of the smaller private circles and the musical gems hidden behind the veil of popular scenes among the forefront Viennese public. Holmes goes on to share his impression of the popular trend of instrumental music in Vienna:

The flippancy of taste displayed by the more fashionable concert-goers in Vienna may be imagined from an exhibition of instrumental playing with which they were entertained on one occasion when I was present, the prominent parts of which were variations for the violin, performed by Madame Paeravicini, and the first movement of Hummel's pianoforte concert in B minor played by Frederic Worlitzer of Berlin, a boy thirteen years old.³⁴

³² Elizabeth Norman McKay, "Schubert as a composer of operas" in *Schubert Studies: Problems of Style and Chronology*. ed. Eva Badura-Skoda and Peter Branscombe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 88.

³³ Reed, 109.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 110.

Not to discredit the music of Hummel,³⁵ who was a Viennese contemporary to Schubert, but it is the presentation of his music by a pseudo-prodigy as well as what must have been a violinist's showy display of variations on a well-known Italian operatic theme winning the public enthusiasm that epitomized the kind of environment in which Schubert felt the unsettling need to compromise. Reed makes an interesting assessment based on Holmes' recollection that it was for this kind of superficial and frivolous audience that "showpieces like the B minor Rondeau Brillante and the C major Fantasie for violin and piano were written."³⁶

Schubert, even among his closest friends and supporters, seldom revealed his innermost feelings about art, poetry and his ideals in relation to his own reality. What is often discussed in Schubert scholarship is his struggle, towards the final years of life, between manifesting what he believed to be his vocation in his time on earth and the cruel reality that never ceased to challenge that belief. At the height of Biedermeier Vienna's frivolity in musical taste, perhaps the non-conforming Schubert who succumbed to his recent failure in the theater and without the impressive dexterity and flamboyant public persona of a virtuoso, felt compelled to compromise and indeed was more than ever "intent upon winning his public" by writing such pot-boilers deliberately void of Schubertian magic.³⁷

Schubert's life-long struggle chained in series of disappointments is evident. The recurring symptoms of his illness towards the end of his life only aggravated his once-mild tendency toward manic-depression³⁸. In fact, some of his close friends such as Bauernfeld and Spaun reported of the dual nature (one of uninhibited Biedermeier gaiety and one of dark

³⁵ Johann Nepomuk Hummel: an Austrian composer and a virtuoso pianist whose mutually respecting relationship with Beethoven eventually led to befriending Schubert. He became the dedicatee of Schubert's last three piano sonatas.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Einstein, 275.

³⁸ It was a genetic disorder from which Schubert suffered since his childhood.

melancholy) in the composer that became more pervasive towards the final years. He was financially hopeless and his own Vienna, among its surrounding cities, seemed to be growing ever more inhospitable for an artist of Schubert's character. Reed's assessment in regards to the purpose of writing such music is certainly plausible, for Schubert was certainly aware of what could appeal to the general audience at the time. However, the purpose for which a piece of music is composed, and especially when composed by someone like Schubert, must not define, for the sake of convenience, the aesthetic value and the language of virtuosity embedded in it.

Virtuoso Music as Perceived by Viennese Audiences in 1828

Schubert was quite capable on the violin and viola. His practice and understanding of these string instruments began in his early childhood and his skill was nurtured in his teens through active participation in the Seminary orchestra. When he grew out of the school orchestras, Schubert continued to play the viola whenever reading some of his own chamber music at Schubertiaden as well as in semi-public/private concerts held by the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*. Piano was an instrument Schubert played with mastery, as considered by the connoisseurs around him and certainly believed so by his brother Ferdinand. He is told to have played the piano in an unusual manner, although without virtuosic flare that was full of insight and expressivity.³⁹ Schubert's caliber as a pianist however was simply incomparable to those of his predecessors, Beethoven and Mozart. More importantly, the so-called brilliant, sometimes tempestuous and flamboyant persona of a virtuoso on public stage was not a part of the private and introverted artist. The fact that the instrumental concerto, a genre fostered by Mozart and Beethoven as a vehicle for the performer's virtuosic display, was deliberately avoided by a multi-faceted genius such as

³⁹ David Schroder, *Our Schubert: His Enduring Legacy* (Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009), 51.

Schubert seems to suggest his insecurity in utilizing the genre to its full potential. His *Konzertstück für Violine und Orchester* in D major, D. 345 (1816) suggests, with its title “concert piece”, Schubert’s respectable attempt at a violin concerto. But as innovative as Schubert always was, such a shortcoming never hindered his imaginative craft. For Schubert, the Rondo, Polonaise, and Fantasy were makeshifts for the concerto genre, and these were the outlets through which he exploited the virtuoso writing for the violin. By the time of the inception of the Fantasy in C for Violin and Piano, he was no stranger to composing for the instrument (Table 1).

Table 1: The Chronology of Schubert’s “Violin Oeuvre”⁴⁰

Year written	Year published	Deutsch number	Title
1816	1897	345	Concert Piece for Violin and Orchestra in D major
1816	1930	354	four comic Ländler in D for Two Violins
1816	early 1900	355, 370, 374	more than two dozen Ländler for the violin (possibly)
1816	1836	384, 385, 408	Sonatas for Piano and Violin (D, a, g)
1816	1897	438	Rondo in A major for Violin and Strings
1816	1865	487	Adagio and Rondo Concertante in F for piano, violin, viola, and cello (a concerto in miniature)
1817	1851	574	Sonata in A for Piano and Violin “Duo” op. posth. 162

⁴⁰ The list features works in which violin assumes a more central role (excluding chamber works).

1817	1928	580	Polonaise in B-flat Major for Violin and Small Orchestra
1817		597a	Variations in A for Violin (sketches, lost)
1826	1827	895, Op. 70	Rondo in B minor for Piano and Violin, as “Rondeau Brillante”
1827	1850	934	Fantasia in C Major for Violin and Piano op. posth. 159

By the year 1827 he had under his belt fifteen string quartets, a string trio in B \flat , two piano trios (B \flat and E \flat), a Quintet in A for piano and strings, and an Octet for strings and winds. As his reputation gradually grew over the years, he came to befriend fine concert artists such as pianist Karl Maria von Bocklet, virtuoso violinists including Josef Slavik, Ignaz Schuppanzigh and Joseph Michael Böhm and a cellist Joseph Linke. These were some of the virtuoso exponents in Schubert’s life who played Schubert’s sonatas and various chamber music in many occasions and inspired the composer to write the kind of music suitable for their virtuoso prowess. The fact that Schubert was not a virtuoso performer must not lead to the assumption that his music is devoid of such elements.

Franz Schubert’s Fantasy for the violin was written towards the end of 1827 and premiered in Vienna on 20 January the following year. It is certainly virtuosic music, as so assessed then too, for both the violin and the piano. It was written for the pianist Bocklet and a young rising virtuoso Josef Slavik who was considered the next Paganini. When it was premiered however, the public reception was so poor so that the hall gradually emptied during the performance. The grounds on which the piece was criticized are listed as the following:

1. Empty virtuosity and too difficult.
2. Misappropriation of the theme from his song and poor construction of variations on the theme.
3. Aesthetically flawed (it fails to capture the essence of Romanticism)

Revisiting above categories will be the basis of my analysis into which I will draw Paganini's composition where appropriate to strengthen my argument.

The significance of Paganini in the 1820s Viennese musical setting

By the mid-1820s, the forefront musical scene in Vienna was one in which Beethoven's late masterpieces had been out of vogue for sometime because of their difficulty and incoherence. The master once hailed as Europe's pivotal figure in music now almost completely lost his audience. The prevailing taste in the Viennese musical world was more superficial and vulgar and than ever before. Music of light-hearted gaiety was preferred over that with philosophical resonance, and simple operatic melody and its flashy variations more appealing than music of subtle nuance and profound subtext. In a world where music was just skin deep and pretentious, there scarcely existed room for Schubert whose expression was now deeply rooted than ever in the realm of perpetual subjectivity. It had always been the case that the unusual ability to put on a showy display on an instrument was popular among the post-war Viennese audiences. In fact, virtuosity was yet another direct path to a guaranteed success in the post-war times. Going well into a decade of growing infatuation with anything exotic and sensually stimulating led the Viennese audiences to acquire what J. N. Burk called a "fetish" for virtuosity.⁴¹ Vienna in 1828 could not be more propitious in worshipping a man who not only was phenomenally gifted with his violin but fantastically clever with putting on a "show" for his audiences.

⁴¹ J. N. Burk, "The Fetish of Virtuosity" *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 4 No. 2. (April 1918), 282-292.

Paganini's feeling for showmanship was uncanny. He raised expectations and curiosity by regularly doubling prices. Rarely playing in the first item of a programme, he would allow an apparently interminable delay before his appearance, and frequently let his lingering shadow be thrown across the stage. There would be much stage business with gloves and handkerchiefs, and even his poor health managed to add to his dramatic impact.⁴²

Here was a case, acutely the opposite of Schubert's, of an artist's ability and persona well in congruence with his time.⁴³ Vienna, among many other European cities soon to be spellbound, was a world ready to be conquered by Niccolò Paganini.

Before Paganini's arrival in Vienna in the March of 1828, his name and tales of his unusual skill on the violin were already known in some of the musically more receptive towns in Europe and most certainly in Vienna. However the true inception of the epoch-making sensation began with his first concert appearance at the *Redouten-saal* on March 29. For this first concert in Vienna, Paganini chose two original compositions written by himself and his own variations on a theme from Rossini's *Le Cenerentola*. In one of his later tour programs, Paganini occasionally included concerti by Rode and Kreutzer just to prove to the critics questioning the lack of comprehensiveness in his musicianship that he could master works written by composers other than himself. Although the concert was yet to be attended by the nobility, his preceding reputation was sufficient enough to bring Kreutzer from Paris, Lipinski from Poland as well as

⁴² Rowe, 35.

⁴³ Paganini's playing and his composition were influenced by Pietro Locatelli (1693-1746) and August Duranowski (1770-1834). Locatelli's twenty-four caprices inspired Paganini to write his own set and Duranowski's impressed Paganini with his technical innovations (harmonics and left-hand pizzicato) and showmanship. While the caprices by Locatelli were shunned for their technical innovations, Duranowski did not have the fortune of enjoying a career as extensive as Paganini did.

all the musical elite of Vienna including Joseph Michael Böhm and Joseph Mayseder⁴⁴ to come hear the much expected wonders on the violin by the Italian. Interestingly enough, Schubert was also present at the historical event and was compelled to hear Paganini two more times after that. What Paganini could do with his violin was beyond the imagination of the contemporary musicians and beyond what was conceivable on the instrument at the time. Giacomo Meyerbeer's simple remark embodies the sentiment of the musical public regarding what they witnessed, "Where our reason ends, there Paganini begins."⁴⁵

In March of 1828 when Paganini began to embark on his concertizing tour beyond the confines of his home country, he was forty-five. He had been touring for years throughout Italy both at public venues and private, so that by the time he decided to expand his career over the rest of Europe, not only did he have plenty of performance experience under his belt, he had become an expert at selling his art. Paganini was very fond of the music of Rossini as much as he revered that of Beethoven. For many of his recitals, Paganini often presented his *tour de force* of technical wizardry with variations based on his favorite melodies by Italian opera composers, including several from Rossini. Vienna's reputation as a town of palpable favoritism for Rossini's operas must have been a significant factor for Paganini in choosing her as his first target of the six-year long European conquest.

Paganini's contribution to violin playing has been well documented in an abundant pool of scholarship: artificial harmonics, double-stopped harmonics, scordatura, left-hand pizzicati and its combination with bowing, performance on one string, ricochet-spiccato, fast chromatic

⁴⁴ Böhm and Meyseder, Viennese virtuoso violinists, would have heard Paganini's playing already during their previous concert tours in Italy. They were pivotal in the growth of the only violinist whose feat, by some, surpassed those of Paganini, Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst.

⁴⁵ Giacomo Meyerbeer, quoted in Boris Schwarz, *Great Masters of the Violin: from Corelli and Vivaldi to Stern, Zukerman, and Perlman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 175.

passages in the highest reaches of the instrument, rapid jumps and leaps, huge left-hand stretches, more complex double stopping and so on.⁴⁶ Through these techniques, he has expanded the instrument's capabilities with regards to register, timbre, and sonority. It was even more impressive that Paganini performed the fiendishly difficult tasks with consummate ease.

⁴⁶ Rowe, 39.

CHAPTER TWO

COMPARISON AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

A Profile of Virtuoso Elements

The term “virtuoso” was broadly used in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Italy to honor an individual who excelled in any intellectual or artistic discipline: a poet, architect, scholar, etc.⁴⁷ In the field of music, the term referred to a person with an exceptional training in theory rather than ability in performance. With the growth of opera and the instrumental concerto in the late eighteenth century, a virtuoso was now an individual with an unusual gift as a performer who pursued a career as a soloist: voice, piano and violin, etc. Thus Schubert, by definition, was not a virtuoso. Furthermore, with Paganini’s arrival at the Viennese musical scene in 1828, the term assumed added implications: a dexterous executant with flamboyant and exhibitionist temperament. Ever since Paganini’s appearance in the history of violin playing and western music, his name has become synonymous with the term “virtuoso”.

The phrase “virtuoso music” or “virtuosity” is often used by critics and scholars to describe the music of Paganini (and some of Schubert’s including the Violin Fantasy), therefore refers to the kind of music appropriate for a virtuoso player to exhibit his extraordinary technical skill. Thus, in turn, a virtuosic piece must contain performance elements that will yield a high level of technical display. In the pieces Paganini performed for his Viennese debut (his second violin concerto, Sonata Militaire on G-string, and variations on Rossini’s *Non più mesta*) these virtuoso elements are delineated through an array of his revolutionary techniques aforementioned. Regardless of its poor reception and neglected fate in violin literature,

⁴⁷ Owen Jander, “Virtuoso,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. Stanley Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: MacMillan, 2001), xxvi: 789.

Schubert's Violin Fantasy has been considered as virtuoso music. However, the Fantasy, conceived before the Viennese musical scene had come to witness Paganini, features at most scale passages, arpeggiations and occasional busy string crossings, but they do not render an aural and visual effect as raw as those in Paganini's concerto and his variations. To put it simply, the Fantasy, in spite of its busy figurations and other technical challenges for its performers, does not sound or look virtuosic.

Paganini and his Virtuoso Code

The legacy of Paganini manifests itself through transcriptions, paraphrases and homages by many composers and instrumentalists of later generations.⁴⁸ Paganini has inspired generations of performers as well as composers of Western music in that he personified an art form in which virtuosity was an indispensable element in expression. But among those who came across the nature of Paganini's art, some tended to solely emphasize the technical bravura in the virtuoso aesthetic. Paganini's artistry at times has been overshadowed by more tangible factors: his achievement and contribution in regards to violin technique. The exhibitionistic nature of virtuosity in his music and the effect-oriented presentation of himself had encouraged some of his listeners conjure up an image of a crowd-pleasing charlatan putting on shows with his trickery. Performers such as Louis Spohr and Charles Phillippe Lafont who belonged to the lineage of the classical school of violin playing acknowledged the technical feats of Paganini, but also questioned the artistic integrity in his music. Even into the twentieth century, there still exist violinists who would choose to characterize Paganini's music as *Virtuosenmachwerke* (pieces of

⁴⁸ Paganini's caprices, Op. 1 (notably the twenty fourth in A minor) and the finale from his second violin concerto, "La Campanella" had been reworked by many composers including Franz Liszt, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Sergei Rachmaninov as well as Witold Lutoslawski, Alfred Schnittke, and Luigi Dallapiccola.

routine display).⁴⁹ However, arguing as to what the true nature of his virtuosity actually was remains counter-constructive because as it will become more apparent from examining the concert program of his Viennese debut in March of 1828, he was both an artist and an exhibitionist. He was a virtuoso of more than one caliber. An account of violinists in the early nineteenth century by the German poet Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) provides an interesting glance on the range of presentation in regards to Paganini's virtuosity.

When it comes to violinists, virtuosity is not entirely the result of mechanical finger velocity and sheer technique, as it is with pianists. The violin is an instrument which has almost human whims – it is attuned to the mood of the player in a sympathetic rapport: a minute discomfort, the tiniest inner imbalance, a whiff of sentiment elicits an immediate resonance ... probably because the violin, pressed against the chest, can perceive our heart's beat. But this happens only with artists who truly have a heart that beats, who have a soul. The more heartless a violinist is, the more uniform will be his performance, and he can count on the obedience of his fiddle, any time, any place. But this much-vaunted assurance is only the result of a spiritual limitation, and some of the greatest masters were often dependent on influences from within and without. I have never heard anyone play better – or, for that matter, play worse – than Paganini...⁵⁰

Paganini's technical mastery on the violin was emulated by his contemporaries but scarcely equaled during his lifetime. But also, and just as importantly, he was tremendously gifted in marketing and selling his own virtuosity. The public uproar following his concerts in Vienna of 1828 is indebted not only to his artistry and consummate mastery of his instrument, but unmistakably also to the way his program was chosen and presented under thoughtful plan and calculation.⁵¹ Paganini knew his audiences and he did everything in his power, from

⁴⁹ Owen Jander, "Virtuoso," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds. Stanley Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: MacMillan, 2001), xxvi: 789. A German expression with a pejorative connotation referring to frivolous music containing showy effects without artistic substance.

⁵⁰ Heinrich Heine, quoted in Schwarz, *Great Masters of the Violin*, 23.

⁵¹ The concert program order of Paganini's Viennese debut in March 29, 1828: Overture to *Fidelio* by Beethoven (continued on the footnote on the next page)

carefully timing his entrance onto the stage to doubling the ticket prices just before the concert day, all to further mystify himself and to provoke anxious curiosity from the anticipating public. The pre-concert ritual was premeditated as to maximize the effect of his performance as well as his presence on stage.

Paganini was extremely meticulous about public exposure of his own compositions. His scrupulous character is well represented by the fact that in addition to always playing his own part from memory with no sheet music laid in front of him, he would collect all the parts from the orchestra players after the rehearsal of his yet unpublished, newest violin concerto. He was always concerned with the danger of revealing his own unique playing methods, bowings, and fingerings, as they give some insights on how to execute the kinds of technical effects he incorporated into his own pieces. It has been thus observed that during the rehearsal of his concertos, Paganini would refrain from playing all the passages note-by-note, skipping the part with his signature virtuoso bravura so that no part of the show is spoiled until the actual performance. Such cautious practice helped increase the expectation even from the musicians behind him on concert day.

As his fame grew, Paganini was aware of the possibility of other violinists around him threatening the commercial value of his identity as the ultimate virtuoso by imitating his playing style and mimicking the effects. Whenever Paganini stayed at the town of his upcoming performance venue and practiced in his room, he never played the entire program and with what he did play, he would use a mute to minimize the potential exposure of the sound from the violin.

Concerto No. 2 in B minor (Paganini)
Aria by Paer (Antonia Bianchi)
Sonata Militaire on the G string (Paganini)
Rondo *Non lusingare a barbaro* (Antonia Bianchi)
Larghetto and Variations on *Non più mesta* from Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (Paganini)

While most of the virtuoso violinists at the time including Böhm and Meyseder in Vienna did not begin to make an attempt at competing with Paganini, the young Wilhelm Ernst sought to discover the secret by following Paganini's concertizing route and renting the adjacent room to where Paganini was lodging and listening to his practice sessions.

Prior to his Viennese debut in 1828, the Twenty-four Caprices for Solo Violin, Op. 1, was the only composition Paganini had allowed to be published.⁵² Although considered unplayable by all the respected violinists at the time, the Op. 1 set has always been highly regarded not only for the motivic originality and harmonic sophistication but even more for the sheer innovation of extensive violin techniques and incorporation of such virtuosity into an ingenious art form. To many musicians of the following generations, the caprices had been considered as a testament to Paganini's consummate artistry and superlative understanding of the violin's capacity. With a handful of modern day virtuosos, they have certainly become readily accessible and a fundamental part of any violinist's repertoire. Ironically, the Op. 1 set never made an appearance in Paganini's own concert programs and certainly not during his six-year European tour. The fact that Paganini, even in Italy before his tour years, scarcely performed any of the caprices in public but mainly the novelty variations and opera-influenced violin concertos, testifies to his insightful assessment of his audiences and on the commercial value of the music he composed.

Prior to his Viennese debut, Paganini was well aware of the favoritism towards Italian operas in the city and its Rossini-mad audiences. He himself was an ardent admirer of Rossini's music and never hesitated to use themes from his operas as a vehicle for his own virtuoso display. In the excerpts chosen, melodies are straightforward and harmonic progressions are

⁵² Published by Ricordi in 1820.

painfully rudimentary. However, such simplicity in structure proved to be a favorable setting for a virtuoso like Paganini to add complex elaborations and to showcase his extravagant pyrotechnics (Example 1.1-2).

The image shows the musical score for the Theme of *Non più mesta*, Op. 12 by Niccolò Paganini. The score is in 3/4 time, marked *MODERATO.* and *dolce.* It features a melody in the upper voice and a piano accompaniment in the lower voice. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The word "TEMA." is written on the left side of the first system.

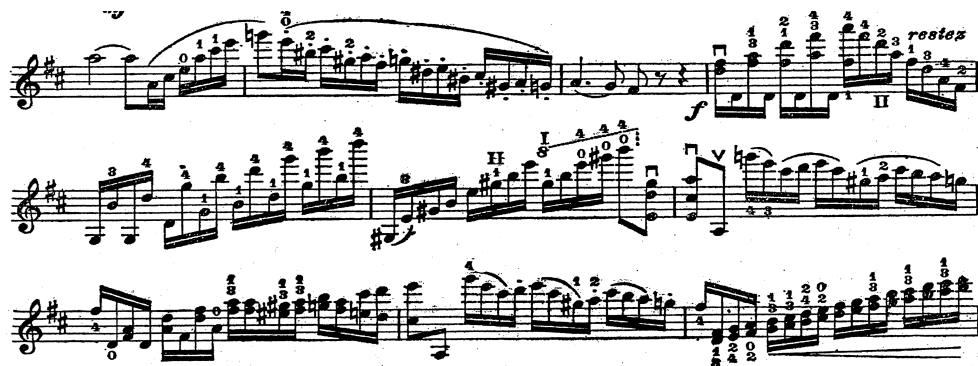
Ex. 1.1: N. Paganini, Theme of *Non più mesta*, Op. 12 from Rossini's *La Cenerentola*.⁵³

The image shows the musical score for the Second variation (beginning) of *Non più mesta*, Op. 12 by Niccolò Paganini. The score is in 12/8 time, marked *Var. II. Molto moderato.* and *a tempo*. It features a melody in the upper voice and a piano accompaniment in the lower voice. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The word "colla parte" is written on the right side of the second and third systems.

Ex. 1.2: N. Paganini, Second variation (beginning) from *Non più mesta*, Op. 12.

⁵³ Refer to the footnote 81 on page 91 regarding the scordatura practice shown here.

The musical profile of Paganinian virtuosity as presented through his Viennese debut of 1828 was in a similar vein to Rossini's virtuosic arias in that it was geared toward creating a spectacle for the soloist only. From *bel canto* playing to flamboyant acrobatics reminiscent of the vocal athleticism of a coloratura soprano in a Rossinian opera, it is the soloist with his virtuosity hovering over the subordinate orchestral/piano accompaniment that single-handedly carries the drama and tension of the music from the beginning to the end (Example 2.1-3). Paganini's violin concertos embodied a wistful sentiment of the post-Napoleonic war era also defined by Maiko Kawabata as "militaristic heroism".⁵⁴



Ex. 2.1: N. Paganini, Second Violin Concerto, Op. 7, First movement, mm. 108-117.

⁵⁴ Maiko Kawabata, "Virtuoso Codes of Violin Performance: Power, Military Heroism, and Gender (1789-1830)" *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Fall 2004), pp. 89-107.

78 Solo.

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

solo.

pizz.

pizz.

Ex. 2.2: N. Paganini, Adagio from Second Violin Concerto, Op. 7, mm. 16-20.

This image shows a page of musical notation for the Adagio from the Second Violin Concerto by Niccolò Paganini, Op. 7, measures 69-71. The score is written for a full orchestra and includes the following parts: Violin I, Violin II, Violin III, Viola, Violoncello (Cello), Double Bass (Bass), Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, and Timpani. The music is in 2/4 time and features a complex, multi-measure rest for the Violin I part in measure 69, which is then resolved in measure 70. The score includes various dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *arco* (arco), and includes the instruction *Tutti arco* in measure 70. The page concludes with the instruction *col volta //* in measure 71.

Ex. 2.3: N. Paganini, Adagio from Second Violin Concerto, Op. 7, mm. 69-71.

Situating Schubert's Virtuoso Violin Fantasy

Before the Paganinian revolution of instrumental virtuosity was revealed to the Viennese musical scene, the seed for stylistic shift in musical trends had been planted as early as the beginning of Biedermeier period (1815-1848). Virtuosity in Rossini's operas evoked rapturous sensation among the enthusiastic Viennese already in 1816, preceding the city's subsequent infatuation with the advent of Paganini twelve years later. The fetish of virtuosity in the early nineteenth century Vienna finds its roots in the city's own Biedermeier culture as well as in its exposure to the *fioritura* in Italian operas at the time. When Schubert was in the midst of working on his more mature operas (between 1819 and 1823), Rossini's operas had not reached the peak of their popularity in Vienna just yet. However, as inconspicuous and distant as Schubert always was from the mainstream musical trends in Vienna, it is hard to suspect that he was completely oblivious to the object of the general public's enthusiasm and the aesthetic profile of popular Italian operas, especially when he immersed himself into that very field at the time. Schubert's private persona certainly limited his networking possibilities. However, as a member of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* his involvement was growing and it provided opportunities for Schubert to come in contact with some of the leading performers in Vienna. In addition, Schubert had his gathering with a group of music connoisseurs known as the *Schubertiaden*.⁵⁵ Schubert's faithful friends played a significant role in shaping his musical expression but just as importantly, the *Schubertiaden* functioned as a conduit between the socially reserved composer and some of the more high-profiled Viennese musicians at the time. When Schubert gradually

⁵⁵ Central members of the *Schubertiaden*: Michael Vogl (bass singer who sang many of Schubert's songs), Joseph von Spaun (a senior civil servant), Eduard von Bauernfeld (playwright), Johann Mayrhofer, Franz Grillparzer, Franz Schober (amateur artist/actor), Moritz von Schwind, Leopold Kupelweiser (painter), Franz Lachner (composer/conductor), Joseph Gahy (an amateur pianist with whom Schubert enjoyed playing the most).

acquainted himself with these individuals, it is highly probable that he became more conscious of the change in popular musical trends toward that of virtuosity. Well into the second decade of the nineteenth century, the shift in prevailing taste was becoming more pronounced as greater numbers of virtuoso instrumentalists surfaced. Patrick McCreless examines the symptoms of this change in Europe at the time when Schubert was struggling to build his reputation as a serious composer.

A budding school of violin playing in Vienna, the appearance of young artists such as [Josef] Slavek and Ignaz Schuppanzigh, growing public adulation of the virtuoso, the increasing prominence and market success of composers and composer-performers who hitched themselves to the new aesthetic – all were signs of a significant shift in taste.⁵⁶

McCreless situates Schubert's Violin Fantasy as the composer's response, a misfired one at that, to this change in musical trend.⁵⁷ McCreless' assessment is potentially appealing when we consider the maturity and consistency in craftsmanship among Schubert's other late works.⁵⁸ Schubert's instrumental output was consistently fertile throughout his life. However, it is clear from revisiting the chronology of his violin-centered repertoire (shown on pages 21-22), that there is a curious gap almost a decade between his "Duo" sonata of 1817 and Rondo Brilliant of 1826, and Fantasy of 1827. More interestingly, there are discernable changes in the profile of writing for the solo violin part in his last two so-called virtuosic violin pieces from all the previous ones. Compare Ex. 3.1-3 with Ex. 3.4-6. With a single exception of his Fantasy in C major for piano "*Wanderer*", D.760 composed in 1822, there is hardly a piece among Schubert's instrumental oeuvre prior to the last two aforementioned works (Rondo and Fantasy) that come

⁵⁶ Patrick McCreless, "A Candidate for the Canon? A New Look at Schubert's Fantasie in C Major for Violin and Piano," *19th-century music* 20, no. 3 (1997), 205-230.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Some of more notable works from Schubert's last years: Fantasy in F minor for piano four hands, D.940, Symphony in C, "Great", D.944, a quintet in C for two violins, viola, two cellos. D.956, the last three piano sonatas, D.958, 959, 960.

close to being considered as ‘virtuosic’ in the early nineteenth century’s standard. Schubert’s only instrumental concerto, a genre established by Mozart and Beethoven as a vehicle for virtuoso display, was the *Konzertstück* in D major, D.345 from 1816. But the concerto (or “concert piece” as Schubert titled it) is anything but ambitious. The title itself suggests a humble take on the genre.⁵⁹ The writing for the solo part virtually never explores the possibilities of polyphonic writing for the violin. It is also quite reserved in exhibiting any technical features then already known for the instrument. The thematic ideas are simple and straightforward without any interesting further development (Example 4). The underlying harmony remains unadventurous while the texture is thoroughly solo-oriented, devoid of dialogue or counterpoint with the monotonous accompanying forces. Schubert’s Rondo in A major for violin and strings, D.438, written in the same year, and his Polonaise in B♭ major for violin and small orchestra, D.580, written a year later, do not render themselves as significantly improved from the concert piece as far as exploration of the virtuosic elements for the solo violin is concerned.



Ex. 3.1: F. Schubert, *Konzertstück* for Violin and Orchestra, D.345, mm. 75-103.

⁵⁹ The full title: *Konzertstück für Violine mit begleitung von Streichquartett, zwei oboen, zwei trompeten und Pauken* (Concert Piece for Violin with accompaniment by string quartet, two oboes, two trumpets, and timpani).



Ex. 3.2: F. Schubert, Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.137 No. 1, D.384, First movement, mm. 1-18.



Ex. 3.3: F. Schubert, Sonata for Violin and Piano in G minor, Op. posth.137 No. 3, D.408, First movement, mm. 1-15.



Ex. 3.4: F. Schubert, Rondo in B minor for Violin and Piano, Op. 70, D.895, Introduction, mm. 1-6.

Ex. 3.5: F. Schubert, Rondo in B minor for Violin and Piano, Op. 70, D.895, mm. 530-551.

Ex. 3.6: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934, mm. 676-700.

Solo.

Ex. 4: F. Schubert, Konzertstück for Violin and Orchestra, D.345, Introduction and Allegro proper (beginning), mm. 12-57.

McCreless supports his view by addressing the Violin Fantasy's odd place in Schubert's otherwise masterpiece-concentrated late years. The pianist Alfred Brendel, as quoted in McCreless' article, shares this sentiment.

With the exception of a few pieces written for virtuoso display in the concert hall, such as some of the violin music and the Variations on ‘Trocke Blumen’ for Flute and Piano [D.802, 1824], nearly all these compositions are on the same high level of accomplishment.⁶⁰

The Violin Fantasy is preceded by Schubert’s last three string quartets (written in 1824 and 1826) including “Rosamunde”, D.804, and “Death and the Maiden”, D.810, and two piano trios written in the same year (B♭, D.898 and E♭, D.929). Immediately following are his Fantasy for Piano duet, D.940, the late piano sonatas (D.958, 959, 960) and the String Quintet in C, D.956. On a bigger scale, his “Great” Symphony in C major, D.944 and *Winterreise* cycle, D.911 were also conceived and written during the last few years of Schubert’s life. Hence, as McCreless and a handful of other Schubert scholars suggest, the Violin Fantasy, with its superfluous virtuosity and the “flawed” aesthetics projected, placed right in the middle of Schubert’s mature and inspirational late years, raises questions pertaining to its purpose. Surely, situating the Violin Fantasy in the context of Schubert’s complete output, as handful of scholars have done, strengthens the claim that the work is in fact an anomaly, a miscalculated attempt at a style of writing that was simply not of Schubert’s own voice. It certainly occupies a curious place within Schubert’s impressive canon.⁶¹

In the context of Biedermeier Vienna and its lingering sentiment of post-war heroism personified by the advent of Paganinian virtuosity, Schubert’s Violin Fantasy and its technical challenges represent work that is out of vogue and out of the tradition of writing for strings. The sharp contrast in the reception of the Viennese audience in 1828 toward Schubert’s Violin Fantasy and Paganini’s virtuoso music was an inevitable one and most certainly, a natural one.

⁶⁰ Alfred Brendel, *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 58.

⁶¹ McCreless, 205.

As a performer, Schubert was proficient on the violin (as well as on the viola and the piano) but at the same time, he never had the technical prowess or the extroverted public persona possessed by Paganini. The writing for the violin in Schubert's music hardly exhibits the protagonist profile evident in those by Paganini. Schubert's virtuoso writing for the violin in his concerto substitutes, be they concert piece, rondo, or polonaise, never quite reflected the popular trend nor explored the instrument's potential to its fullest.

In order to better grasp the nature of virtuosity in Schubert's language, we must re-conceptualize the term from its conventional meaning and connotation initially established during the early nineteenth century and then epitomized during the Paganinian era. I will now propose a different approach to understanding Schubert's virtuoso code.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYTICAL RECONCEPTUALIZATION

The Rondo in B minor and the Fantasy in C major are Schubert's two "virtuoso" pieces written for violin and piano during his final years: 1826 and 1827 respectively. The manifestation of virtuosity in these works suggests a language that is fundamentally different from the virtuosity of Paganini. Schubert is often considered as a respectful heir to Beethoven in the lineage of great classical composers. Like his predecessor, Schubert excelled in writing for a wide range of genres. He belonged, more or less, to what Schroeder called, "the generation of universalist composers" who wrote every type of genre known at the time.⁶² Paganini on the other hand, was a violinist of unparalleled gift and aptitude for his instrument who wrote music exclusively for the overriding purpose of capitalizing on his own playing abilities and style. Unlike Schubert, he was a specialist. If Paganini's virtuosity is directly communicated through the performer's execution, Schubert's virtuosity requires analysis and interpretation. In other words, virtuosity in Paganini's music is effect-oriented, and thus created to be instantly heard and felt through our senses, virtuosity in Schubert's music is integrated into the expression that needs to be studied and interpreted to know its purpose and function. When the issue of virtuosity is discussed among scholars, such discretion is hardly taken into consideration. To better understand the meaning of virtuoso writing in Schubert's violin music, we need to reconceptualize the term.

⁶² Schroeder, 67.

An Interpretation of Schubert's Virtuosity

Ever since its premiere, Schubert's Violin Fantasy, D.934 has been categorized as a virtuoso piece. Situating the work in the context of 1820's Vienna and more specifically, setting its poor reception against the sensation brought by Paganini's music of 1828 establishes the fact that the style of composition was simply not congenial to the popular trend at the time. Ever since then, performers as well as scholars including Maurice Brown and Patrick McCreless have continued to categorize the work as a virtuoso piece and a poorly conceived one at that. To recap Brown's comment on the virtuosity of the Fantasy, "...the rich embroidery begins and the music grows turgid".⁶³ Such sentiment is echoed by McCreless who proposed technical difficulty (for the violin) as one of the key reasons for the poor reception of the Fantasy and its neglect in the violin literature: "[t]hat the Fantasie's ferocious technical demands have always had a negative impact on its reception and programming history is hardly disputable."⁶⁴ That the idea of "a poorly conceived virtuoso writing" still serves as one of the main reasons behind contemporary criticisms of the work, it requires us to revisit the meaning of virtuosity and how the term has been applied by scholars to describe the writing in the Fantasy. First, what, precisely, constitutes "virtuosity" in instrumental music? As much as the nature of writing in Schubert's Violin Fantasy differs from that in Paganini's violin music, the piece has been and still to this day, considered as a virtuosic one. Thus virtuosity is not just about the sheer effect of presentation. If Schubert's Fantasy can be categorized as "virtuosic" as it has been thus far by a pool of scholars, musicologists, and violinists, then the claim must rest on the fact that the work contains formidable technical challenges for its performers. Hence, the following equation can be established: Severe technical difficulty = Virtuosity. Subsequently, the equation generates other

⁶³ Brown, 270.

⁶⁴ McCreless, 206.

critical questions. If rich embroidery can potentially cause the music to grow turgid, and if daunting technical difficulty can in fact have a negative impact on a work's musical value, why is it that Paganini's music, many of which are richly embellished variations and many of which feature fiendishly difficult techniques, not only created such sensation in the past but also has ever since been considered as an aesthetic that forever influenced the writing of Western music? Why is it that virtuosic embroidery in Schubert's Fantasy is unnecessary and excessive when the *fioritura* of Paganini's variations is considered as an indispensable part of musical expression? Can a piece's aesthetic worth be satisfactorily explained only in terms of its virtuoso utterance or justly assessed in terms of pure theoretical concepts? Instead of investigating all the theoretical and aesthetic reasons for determining the necessity and function of virtuoso elements in a piece of work, we need an approach from a performer's perspective to the physical nature of the performance elements we often indiscreetly label as "virtuosic". What we can firmly establish at this point is that the Violin Fantasy, like many works of Paganini, is technically challenging yet when executed, the result is not as rewarding for its performer nor as instantly effective to its listeners. In other words, Paganini's virtuoso music, in spite of its daunting challenges for the player, has merits that can be felt and heard immediately whereas in Schubert's Fantasy, its merits, if any, are not as raw and instantaneous; thus it needs to be studied to be appreciated. Whether or not to label such unrewarding technical difficulty as "virtuosic" is another matter I will later discuss in chapter four. But first let us clarify the following. Just because the violin writing in Schubert's Fantasy does not present any revolutionary techniques *a la Paganini* and thus renders no visual and aural spectacle, it does not suffice to claim that its virtuosity is empty and superfluous. Also, just because the technical challenge is unrewarding and yields no instant effect for its listener, does not make the music turgid and less valuable.

Schubert's Approach to Violin Writing

The aesthetic of Schubert's music is ensemble-oriented both in its conception and projection. Even in a case where a single voice is highlighted and emphasized, its meaning is contextual within a larger framework of the music and its intention is never an effect-inducing gesture. The only genre in which there is a protagonistic voice set in the foreground is lieder and even there, the narrated drama and tension of the music are often shared with the piano, which provides the harmonic framework as well as the ambience and the overall mood of each song. In Schubert's two virtuoso violin works, the Rondo Brillante in B and the Fantasy in C, the violin part is integrated into the ensemble not only in structural texture but also in musical expression. The work's virtuoso effect, although less flashy than that of Paganini, is achieved as an ensemble between the violin and the piano.

By revisiting the chronology of Schubert's violin oeuvre and examining the palpable shift of musical trends in Vienna through the rise of virtuoso performers, we may suspect that when Schubert composed the Violin Fantasy, he surely had in mind the technical prowess of the duo, Bocklet and Slavik, who had just premiered the other virtuoso piece, the Rondo Brillante in B. Whether or not the Fantasy was hurriedly composed as Schubert hoped to win the public and to make ends meet, the work not only requires formidable dexterity from both players, but a perceptive vision and interpretive mind to make musical and structural sense out of the piece. Unlike Paganini's virtuoso music geared towards highlighting the solo instrument, the Fantasy is still a chamber work that strikes a good balance between the two instruments.

A closer observation of some of Schubert's more notable chamber works reveals an intriguing shift in the nature of writing for the violin. Let us take into consideration the straightforwardness and simplicity of the violin part in his concerto substitutes (the genres geared

towards virtuoso display of the solo instrument) such as the *Konzertstück*, D.345, the Rondo in A, D.438, and Polonaise in B♭, D.580. Then, we will juxtapose the violin writing (for the sake of simplicity, we will consider the first violin part only) in each of the following chamber works written contemporaneously. See the following examples (5.1-2, 6.1-3, and 7.1-2), collated by year, with techniques highlighted.

Writings from 1816
[Register expansion]



Ex. 5.1: F. Schubert, Rondo in A for Violin and Strings, D.438, mm. 75-103.



Ex. 5.2: F. Schubert, String Quartet No. 11 in E major, D.353 (Op. 125 No.2), end of the first movement.

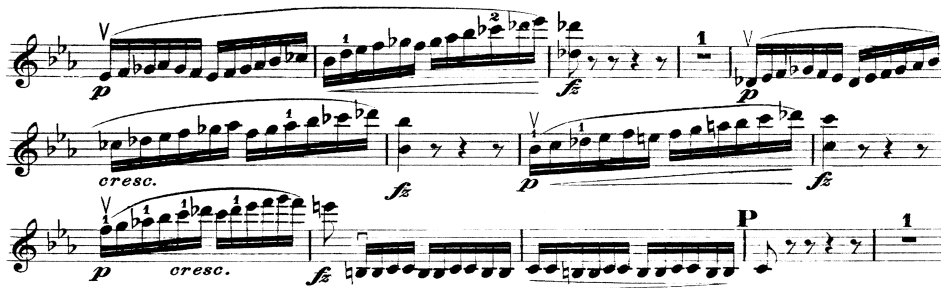
Writings from 1817
[Phrase structure]



Ex. 6.1: F. Schubert, Polonaise in B flat major for Violin and Orchestra, D.580
Antecedent (4) + consequent (4) phrases, mm. 1-8.



Ex. 6.2: F. Schubert, Sonata for Violin and Piano "Duo" in A major, Op. posth.162, D.574, mm.
1-22.



Ex. 6.3: F. Schubert, String Quartet No. 12, D.703, "Quartettsatz" (1820), mm. 229-243.

Other chamber works written in the last years, 1824-1828

Musical score for Ex. 7.1, showing measures 89 to 107. The score is in D minor and 3/4 time. It features five staves of music. Measure 89 starts with a forte (ff) dynamic and a rapid sixteenth-note passage. Measure 94 has a decrescendo (decresc.) marking. Measure 99 has a piano (p) dynamic and another decrescendo. Measure 102 has a pianissimo (pp) dynamic. Measure 105 has a decrescendo and a triplet of eighth notes. The score includes various articulations like accents and slurs.

Ex. 7.1: F. Schubert, String Quartet in D minor, D.810, First movement, mm. 89-107.

Musical score for Ex. 7.2, showing measures 1 to 47. The score is in C major and 3/4 time. It features five staves of music. Measure 1 has a piano (p) dynamic and a violin (V) marking. Measure 9 has a forte (f) dynamic. Measure 19 has a pianissimo (pp) dynamic. Measure 26 has a piano (p) dynamic and a violin (V) marking. Measure 34 has a forte (f) dynamic and a violin (V) marking. Measure 39 has a forte (f) dynamic and a violin (V) marking. Measure 43 has a forte (f) dynamic and a violin (V) marking. The score includes various articulations like accents, slurs, and fingerings.

Ex. 7.2: F. Schubert, String Quintet in C, D.956, First movement, mm. 1-47.

The juxtaposition indicates that the violin parts in Schubert's chamber works are not only more adventurous in their ideas, but more demanding for the player in purely technical terms. Comparing the nature of violin writing in Schubert's so-called virtuoso genre with the violin parts in his chamber works further strengthens the claim that Schubert's musical language becomes much more imaginative in an ensemble setting. Moreover, it suggests a new perspective: virtuosity in Schubert's violin music is never an end itself but always a means to other ends. In Schubert's language, virtuosity is a byproduct of communicating a larger musical idea and is not the main purpose in and of itself. Technical difficulty that arises from any form of virtuoso writing is never for the sake of display because it exists as a necessary part of the expression integrated into the music.

Virtuoso Passages and the Technical Difficulties Projected

The Fantasy's virtuosity triggered harsh reviews from the critics. Many violinists of later generations including Boris Schwarz and Wilhelmj August, made remarks in regards to certain passages as virtually unplayable (Example 8). The most recent edition (2007) of the Violin Fantasy from Bärenreiter includes both the urtext edition and an extra violin part with some alterations of passages "motivated by considerations of violin technique" (Example 9.1-3).⁶⁵ Comparing the "simplified" version to the original provides some insights into a contemporary perception of violin idiom and virtuosity. Furthermore, I will incorporate some of these altered passages as examples to support my interpretation of Schubert's virtuosity.

⁶⁵ Franz Schubert, *Fantasie in C für Violine und Klavier, D.934* (Urtext der Neuen Schubert-Ausgabe: Bärenreiter Kassel, 2000) preface, IV.

[The arpeggios in the Finale considered by Boris Schwarz as “virtually unplayable”]

Ex. 8: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934, mm. 521-546.

[The original and the simplified version, published by Bärenreiter, BA 6520]

Ex. 9.1: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934, mm. 262-263.

Original

Musical score for the original version of Ex. 9.2, measures 290-301. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts at measure 290 and ends at measure 301. The second staff starts at measure 297 and ends at measure 301. The key signature is C major, and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets and slurs.

Simplified

Musical score for the simplified version of Ex. 9.2, measures 290-301. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts at measure 290 and ends at measure 301. The second staff starts at measure 297 and ends at measure 301. The key signature is C major, and the time signature is 4/4. The music is a simplified version of the original, with fewer notes and simpler rhythms.

Ex. 9.2: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934, mm. 290-301.

[The arpeggios in the Finale, the simplified version]

Musical score for the simplified version of Ex. 9.3, measures 521-546. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff starts at measure 521 and ends at measure 530. The second staff starts at measure 530 and ends at measure 537. The third staff starts at measure 537 and ends at measure 540. The fourth staff starts at measure 540 and ends at measure 546. The key signature is C major, and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets and slurs. Dynamics include *cresc.*, *ffz*, *f*, and *ff*.

Ex. 9.3: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934, mm. 521-546.

By contextualizing some of the virtuoso passages in the Violin Fantasy, it becomes clear that they serve structural and expressive purposes. Furthermore, looking into the physical realization of the “virtuosic” passages strongly suggests that when Schubert conceived the violin part, the instrument’s idiom was hardly the priority.

The Finale’s Arpeggios

Example 8 shows the notoriously difficult arpeggio passages that have been one of the more controversial cases exemplifying an unidiomatic conception for the violin. In larger context, it becomes obvious that these busy figurations are never to be sweeping bursts of technical bravura but broken chords functioning as a sequence of harmonic modulations that serve an important musical purpose in the overall harmonic scheme of the finale movement.

Although the Violin Fantasy’s “flaws” have encouraged scholars to categorize the piece as lacking the usual Schubertian craftsmanship, hence oddly placed among other superb works of his late years, the harmonic structure of the Violin Fantasy bears a trait that is a hallmark of the composer in that it is built around submediant key relationships. The harmonic layout of the Finale is in fact a microcosm of the entire work’s harmonic structure (Table 2).

Table 2: Formal Structure of the Violin Fantasy, D.934

I	II	III	[Reprise of Introduction]	IV [Finale]	[Reprise of song theme]	CODA
1-36	37-351	352-479	480-92	493-638	639-64	665-700
Andante Molto	Allegretto	Andantino Variations	[Andante Molto]	Allegro Vivace	[Andantino]	Presto
A	A	A Dev. (aabab)	A Dev. C~	A B Dev. A B Dev. A (aabb)		
C	a-C	A~a-C	A ^b	C	C C a-C A ~ a-C A ^b -C	C
Finale: C	C	a-C	A ~ a-C	A ^b -C		

Harmonic layout of the Finale (mm.493–638) as a microcosm of the entire harmonic structure

Exhaustive application of the submediant ($C - A/A^b$) relationship is evident throughout the entire work. In the Finale, Schubert incorporates rapid harmonic progressions as a sequential motive to dictate all the necessary modulations required by the music’s harmonic organization. Schubert then simply assigns the violin part an arpeggiated version of all the chord progressions of the modulatory sequences.

By examining the arpeggio passages of the violin part, we can discern how Schubert’s understanding and consideration of violinistic idiom are weighed against his musical intentions. The reduction of these arpeggios clearly indicates that Schubert tried to observe smooth voice leading, treating the broken chords as a four-part texture. Such treatment renders an unusual spacing for the violin, forcing the player to contort and stretch his fingers to execute them. But because the chords are arpeggiated and not stacked as blocked chords, it allows the player to finesse the complex fingerings and stretches making the passages executable without any insurmountable difficulty. What makes these passages truly “virtuosic” to the point where it has been considered virtually unplayable by someone like Boris Schwarz, is the sheer speed at which

the performer is asked to execute them. The Finale is marked *Allegro Vivace*. While various tempi can be chosen by the performer, slowing it down to the point that allows considerable ease and comfort for executing the arpeggios will no longer present the music in the general range of *Vivace* tempo. Notwithstanding the interpretive nature of tempo indications, the arpeggios do present physical challenges for the violinist when contextualized within the suggested character of the Finale movement.

In these arpeggio passages, Schubert incorporates a chain of German augmented-sixth chords to provide harmonic drive towards the tonic triads at the end of each set (Figure 1.1-4). The voice leading patterns show that Schubert intended to preserve the tendency notes, lowered $\hat{6}$ and raised $\hat{4}$ resolving in a contrary motion to $\hat{5}$, in the augmented chords to propel the harmonic momentum forward by outlining a chromatic contrary motion. A close observation of the voice leading in the arpeggio reductions reveals that Schubert was not completely inconsiderate of the violin idiom. Or rather, he was and had to be conscious of the instrument's physical limitations. The resolution chord at the end of the first set of progression shows an idiomatic spacing of a major triad for the instrument: a fifth interval for the bottom two strings (the root and the fifth of the triad) and a sixth interval for the top two strings (the third and the root of the triad) (Figure 1.1). Had Schubert insisted on ideal voice leading, the leading tone (B natural) in the penultimate chord would resolve up to C rather than down to G. Then the resolution would have a C octave for the bottom two strings instead of a fifth interval. This alternative is still playable on the violin but certainly less desirable because 1) it is unnecessarily more laborious for the left hand and 2) the resolution chord would be missing the fifth of the triad, thus not as full as the original solution. The resolution in the second set also hints at the composer's awareness of the congenial spacing of a triad for the violin (Figure 1.2). Consider

also the alternative for this case. The voicing shown in the third reduction presents a clear case where Schubert had to accommodate the physical limitations on the instrument (Figure 1.3). The bass notes in the first and the third chord (E and F) are just below the instrument's register and thus are omitted. But by observing the pattern of the bass line from the first set of progression, we can certainly assume that these two pitches would have otherwise been included had it not been for the instrument's limitation. In the three chords that lead into the final A major triad, the usual spacing changes. Here, Schubert resorts to octave displacements of the bass notes (F sharp-E-E) and one of the inner voices (A), thus making the passage playable on the violin while preserving all the chord tones. In the last set of arpeggios, Schubert is able to sustain the desirable voice-leading that is also playable on the instrument. For the resolution chord at the end, Schubert simply chooses to leave the C# in the bass rather than resolving up to an F# (Figure 1.4).

Alternative resolution

G:I Ger⁺6 (II) Ger⁺6 (III) vii^{o4}₃ I
 V of D V of E C: of V V⁶₄-⁵₃

Idiomatic spacing Not ideal for the violin

Figure 1.1: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934 Finale, mm. 529-533 (reduction).

E: I - (Ger⁺6) - I vii^{o4}₃ (bVII) Ger⁺6
 (Tonic prolongation) of bVII V of G Am: V⁶₄ - ⁵₃ i

Alternative resolution

Possible alternative with the bass moving up

Figure 1.2: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934 Finale, mm. 537-541 (reduction).

Alternative Voice-leading

[Octave displacement]

Ideal voice-leading, but not executable on the violin

Figure 1.3: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934 Finale, mm. 583-587 (reduction).

Contrary motion of the outer voices creating harmonic momentum

Figure 1.4: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934 Finale, mm. 591-595 (reduction).

In the simplified version of these arpeggios from the Bärenreiter edition, the bass notes are left out for the most part and the passages are considerably less burdensome for the player and the figurations more idiomatic for the instrument (Example 9.2, pg. 54). Here, most of the notes are still preserved. Furthermore, the melodic pitches at the top are now reiterated, making it easier to hear the melodic line that often needs to be articulated. Such a common maneuver of arpeggiating over three strings, instead of all four strings as in the original, could have not been inconceivable to Schubert. Knowing that harmonic progression with four-part voice leading could have been the central concern of Schubert's, the simpler version might not have been so appealing to him because of the harmonic importance of the bass notes in these particular progressions.

Analyzing these unidiomatic and technically challenging passages helps us to visualize Schubert's intention. What Schubert intended to communicate was a strong harmonic drive with a convincing momentum in sequences as is needed within a short movement that requires rapid modulations.

Schubert was never a virtuoso violinist but at the same time, analyzing above passages indicates that his knowledge of the instrument was sufficient. However, contextualizing the problematic virtuoso passages of the Finale reveals to us that although Schubert was knowledgeable on the violin, instrumental idiom hardly governed his compositional process. The rapid progression of these broken chords serve a structural and musical function. Any technical difficulty proposed by the part writing is but a byproduct and not for the sake of flashy virtuoso display.

Octaves in the Violin Writing of Paganini and Schubert

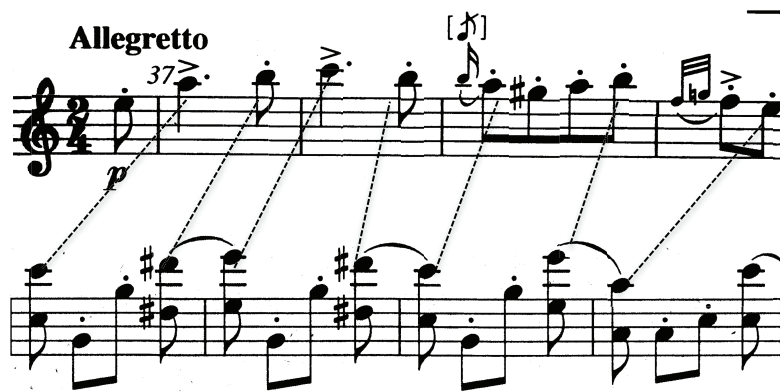
One of the crowning achievements of Paganini was the extended use of multi-stopped chords on the violin. He often incorporated rapid successions in thirds, sixths, octaves, and tenths into his compositions. Although Schubert's Violin Fantasy was conceived before the composer was directly exposed to Paganinian techniques, it features occasional utilization of multi-stopped chords.

One of the more frequently employed double-stops by Paganini was octave, and more specifically a rapid succession of octaves as a way of exhibiting virtuoso bravura (Example 10). Even prior to the advent of Paganini, use of octaves was already established in the violin literature and the purpose behind Schubert's utilization of octaves present a sharp contrast to the purpose in Paganini's music. As an example of this contrast, I will again refer to the altered passages in the simplified version in the Bärenreiter edition as a basis of my assessment on what has been considered as virtuosic in the Violin Fantasy.



Ex. 10: N. Paganini, Third Variation from *Non più mesta*, Op. 12 from Rossini's *La Cenerentola*.

Example 9.2 (pg. 54) shows one of the few octave passages in the Fantasy that has been simplified. The original version requires constant shifting of the left hand for the player. Such business seems unnecessarily laborious and it does not lend any audibly and visually impressive effects. However, placing it in context delineates its motivic relevance to the section and to the entire Allegretto movement. The reason for doubling the melodic line is clear: to emphasize and reinforce the motivic idea that could otherwise get lost in the midst of the chromatic runs exerted by both hands of the pianist. The motivic idea is a development of the theme *a la hongroise* introduced at the beginning of the Allegretto movement (Example 11).



Ex. 11: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934
Allegretto, mm. 37-40, mm. 293-296.

The theme's first alteration appears in the violin part in measure 265 in the key of A minor, at the beginning of a transition that eventually leads straight into the next major section, the Andantino (Example 12). The transition takes the music to distant key areas as it features a chain of momentary tonicizations. The altered opening motivic idea plays a pivotal role in that it governs the tonicizations through its own diatonic sequences. The motivic idea in the violin part tonicizes E minor as the piano takes over in the left hand (mm. 273-280). The music lands momentarily on B minor as a second alteration of the motivic idea is introduced by the piano's left hand (mm. 281-286), tonicizing F# minor, and then given to the right hand (mm. 287-292)

The image displays a page of musical notation for the final section of Schubert's Fantasy in C major. The score is arranged in six systems, each with a single treble clef staff (representing the violin) and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) for the piano accompaniment. The measures are numbered 258, 264, 270, 276, 283, and 290. The key signature is C major. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. Performance instructions include 'cresc.' (crescendo) in measures 258 and 264, 'f' (forte) in measure 264, and 'fz' (forzando) in measure 283. An '8va' marking is present in measure 270. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 12: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth. 159, D. 934
Allegretto, mm. 258-295.

eventually landing on C# minor where the violin begins the strenuous octave passages all the while continuing the process of rapid tonicizations of distant keys. Throughout this entire process in the transition, the rate of tonicization intensifies. Between measures 265 and 280, the motivic idea is built as a 4+4 phrase length: the idea plus its diatonic sequence. Thus, in the first sixteen measures, it takes eight measures to travel to the next distant key area. When the motivic idea is altered for the second time (mm. 281-292), it is also shortened to six measures thus allowing just six measures to reach its next harmonic destination. When the violin finally takes over the motive, it further shortens the process by occupying just eight measures altogether to get to the key of E♭, the final point of arrival, the dominant of the key of the Andantino in A♭ major. Going back to measure 265, the motivic idea is played on a single string on the violin. As the harmonic progression intensifies, it is played in octaves on the piano. Therefore, when the violin finally takes over in measure 293, it seems only sensible to emphasize the pitches that outline the motivic idea by doubling them in octaves so that what needs to be heard can pierce through the chromatic run that is treated as a counter melody.

The Theme and Variations in the Violin Fantasy: A Proposed Problem and a Critical Perspective

The last case for my analysis of “virtuoso” passages in Schubert’s Violin Fantasy is the variations on his own *Sei mir gegrüsst* in the Andantino section. Among a handful of passages projected as problematic for their trivial virtuoso interjections, the violin part in the variations has been the center of much criticism.

Besides the issue of exhibiting empty virtuosity, the variations presented a whole new dimension of problems for McCreless who elaborates on Arthur Godel’s claim that the Fantasy’s

virtuoso rendition utterly fails to capture the essence of Romanticism so vividly expressed in the song: “empty virtuosity...applied thoughtlessly, needlessly to a song supposedly undeserving of such treatment”.⁶⁶ But does the Violin Fantasy actually need to do so to justify its musical worth? In fact, because the variations are built upon a theme from a lied, the entire theme and variations movement exemplifies how Schubert transforms his craft and communicates his intention without a singer and the texts.

Friedrich Rückert’s strophic poem features a typical “tragic-ironic trope” of the nineteenth century Romanticism: a protagonist’s hope and yearning never fulfilled in reality.⁶⁷ There is also a clear sense of a progressive drama through the growing length of each stanza as Schubert employs various means of text-painting to capture the essence of the poem. For his instrumental rendition, Schubert creates a condensed version of the song into a twenty-four measure binary variation theme. In doing so, Schubert makes several modifications, such as omitting the piano introduction and inserting a refrain with a short motivic and a harmonic sequence that somewhat resembles the digressions of the fifth stanza. According to McCreless and Godel, the result of such modifications in the Violin Fantasy is an undesirable compromise. Furthermore, the “cheap virtuoso variations” built on such poorly constructed theme negate the essence of a progressive drama.⁶⁸ Although McCreless and Godel’s assessment contains its logic and rationale, it is based on a blunt juxtaposition lacking a critical perspective on the genres fundamentally different in their tools of communication. A theme-with-variations structure conveys an entirely different framework of expression from a lied. For his Fantasy, Schubert simply borrowed a melody from a song to be reused as a source for strictly instrumental

⁶⁶ McCreless, 207.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 208.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 210.

utterance within the framework of theme and variations. This shift in genre and instrumentation certainly presents some obvious limitations in expression but at the same time, it allows other new possibilities.

First, I will present McCreless' viewpoint on how the concept of Romanticism is depicted through various means in *Sei mir gegrüsst*. Then, I will discuss the ways in which Schubert translates his musical language from a lied to an instrumental theme and variations. By examining the losses and gains from shifting the genre, I hope to construct a plausible argument against those by McCreless and Godel. Consequently, I will contextualize the violin part of the variations to show how the virtuoso elements are once again a purposeful part of a more comprehensive expression.

Romanticism Portrayed

According to McCreless, Schubert achieves a clear depiction of the Romantic dichotomy between reality and the imagination by setting the inner voice to the singer's first line: "*O du Entriss'ne mir und meinem Kusse*" (O you, who have been torn from me and my kisses), juxtaposed to the top melody line on the piano that represents "what the singer longs for but cannot attain" (Example 13).⁶⁹ Only when the singer utters the hopeful phrase "*sei mir gegrüsst, sei mir geküsst*" (May I greet you, may I kiss you), does Schubert restore the melodic line to the singer's voice. Moreover, McCreless endorses the idea of the song's literal representation of the "unattainable beloved" by placing the piano's melody on offbeats and in the higher register hovering over the singer's line, thus never in sync with the singer neither in time nor space.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 221.

Langsam. 1921.

Singstimme.

Pianoforte. *pp mit erhobener Dämpfung.*

O du Ent - riss' - ne mir und mei-nem

Kus - se! sei mir ge-grüsst, sei mir ge-küsst, sei mir ge-

Ex. 13: F. Schubert, *Sei mir gegrüsst*, Op. 20 No. 1, mm. 1-17.

There are a total of five strophes in *Sei mir gegrüsst* and each strophe grows in length over the course of the entire lied, and the narrated drama intensifies with greater harmonic digression each time. Throughout this “progressive intensification” as McCreless puts it, the singer’s melodic line attempts to break out of the middle register by a means of *Übergreifung* (“reaching over” to the top line), but without success (Figure 2).⁷⁰ The gradual elevation of the singer’s register towards the realm of the piano’s melodic line unmistakably indicates the ever-growing yearning of the protagonist. After couple of attempts in the strophes 3 and 4, the singer finally takes over the top register in the final strophe with the statement, “*Ich bin bei dir, Du bist bei mir*” (I am with you, you are with me) in measures 82-85 (Example 14). For the first time in the entire song, the singer’s hopeful plea for unification is not in the subjunctive mood or past

⁷⁰ Ibid.

tense, but in the present indicative mood.⁷¹ The much anticipated unification between the protagonist and his beloved is hopeful yet momentary. Schubert depicts the short-lived illusion with a conventional circle-of-fifths harmonic pattern, as opposed to the usual sequence in pair of thirds.⁷² Plus, in these four measures, the rate of harmonic progression becomes four-times quicker than the preceding equivalent spots (two chords in a measure as opposed to changing every other measure), implying how the flow of time is perceived by the protagonist during such a momentary glimpse of happiness. With the piano's C \flat burst on the downbeat of measure 86, the illusional unification is shattered as the singer cries in despair, "*ich halte dich in diese Arms Umschlusse*" (I hold you closely in my arms' embrace), holding on to the high G \flat before returning back to reality in the middle register below the piano's melody line (mm.86-89). The G \flat sustained by the singer in measure 88 represents all the previous F#s (enharmonically spelled) in the main subjunctive statement "*Sei mir gegrüsst, sei mir geküsst*" that always resolved down to F natural but never upward.

The image displays a musical score for three strophes of the song 'Sei mir gegrüsst'. Each strophe is represented by a system of two staves: a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The first system covers measures 30 to 42, the second system covers measures 45 to 57, and the third system covers measures 61 to 75. The piano part features a consistent harmonic pattern of chords in the left hand, with measure numbers 30, 34, 39, 42, 45, 49, 54, 57, 61, 65, 72, and 75 marked below the staff. The vocal line contains melodic phrases with various note values and rests, including some slurs and ties. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or F minor), and the time signature is 3/4.

Figure 2: McCreless' linear analysis of *Sei mir gegrüsst*, strophes 3-5, mm. 30-77.⁷³

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 222.

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's 'Sei mir gegrüsst', Op. 20 No. 1, measures 74-99. It consists of five systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'sei mir ge-küsst, sei mir ge-küsst! Ein Hauch der Lie-be til-get Räum und Zei-ten, ich bin bei dir, du bist bei mir, ich hal-te dich in dieses Arms Um-schlus-se, sei mir ge-grüsst, sei mir ge-küsst, sei mir ge-küsst!'. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* and *ppp*, and various musical notations like slurs and accents.

Ex. 14: F. Schubert, *Sei mir gegrüsst*, Op. 20 No. 1, mm. 74-99.

As McCreless suggests, the romantic-tragic trope in Friedrich Rückert's poem is vividly portrayed through Schubert's masterful composition. Acknowledging Schubert's musical depiction through role-assigned voicing and harmonic manipulation along with other means of text painting is certainly an agreeable interpretation. As a matter of fact, that is precisely what Schubert sought to do as a prolific composer of German lieder. McCreless argues that all the depiction of such a Romantic concept is completely lost in the Andantino's theme where Schubert simply applies the straightforward voicing from the song's piano introduction unto both

instruments' lines. Thus in the Fantasy's variation theme, Schubert eliminates the potential for any musical depiction of the lied's texts.

Romantic Dichotomy Translated

In McCreless's view, there is a clear representation of a protagonist and his beloved in *Sei mir gegrüsst*. The protagonist's state of wistful yearning is aurally depicted through Schubert's manipulation of register and rhythm between the voices: the singer and the piano. These elements are accompanied by the underlying harmony in creating tension and momentum of a progressive drama. However, all this aside, the text itself is the literal, thus the most compelling, indication of a lied's intended expression. While Schubert was undoubtedly gifted in setting words to music, it was always the poetry in those texts that triggered the composer's imagination and propelled his musical creativity. However when the narrated drama takes a purely instrumental form, such literal utterance is sacrificed. When Schubert borrows a melodic idea from a song to write a variation theme for a violin-piano duo, the musical expression cannot be as literal as the original lied. With the change of genre, there is a clear shift in Schubert's expressive goal: from text setting to composing a theme and variations that is a part of an instrumental Fantasy. Thus, literal manifestation of the Romantic dichotomy was never Schubert's goal when writing the Andantino movement. The following in-depth examination of the Andantino movement will suggest that Schubert does not completely disregard the elements of Romanticism but simply translates the Romantic language into one more congenial and fitting for instrumental variations.

The Formal Structure of the Theme

The lied *Sei mir gegrüsst* is in the key of B \flat major whereas the theme and variations section in the Violin Fantasy is in the key of A \flat major (a lowered submediant in the piece's overall key of C major). Unlike in *Sei mir gegrüsst*, there is no introduction in the Fantasy's Andantino movement.⁷⁴ In addition to omitting the introduction, Schubert makes other structural adjustments. The first part of the theme, he combines different elements from the first eighteen measures of the lied (the piano introduction plus the first strophe of the singer) into a ten-measure opening statement of the theme played by the piano (Example 15.1-2). The phrase structure of the theme is 4+6: a four-measure antecedent phrase and a four-measure consequent phrase plus a repeat of the cadential gesture (V – I) in its last two measures. This asymmetry in phrase construction is identical to the structure of the first strophe (mm. 9-18) from the song. The antecedent phrase of the theme however resembles the first four measures of the piano introduction in that the beginning part of the *Urlinie* (fundamental line) is similarly outlined through the right hand of the piano (Figure 3).

⁷⁴ This omission is common considering that the material is now stated as a reworked variation theme, intended for a single movement of a larger instrumental chamber work and not as an independent set of variations such as his *Trockne Blumen* Variations, D. 802 for Flute and Piano, where Schubert adds a piano introduction. In the Fantasy's Andantino, the piano's statement of the theme can be regarded as a functional equivalent to an introduction in that it introduces the main melody for later development.

Other cases in which the introduction is omitted when a song's melody is reused for an instrumental genre include, *Die Forelle*, D.550, in the fourth movement of the "Trout" Quintet in A, D.667, and *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, D.531, in the second movement in String Quartet in D minor "Death and the Maiden", D.810.

1921.

Langsam.

Singstimme.

Pianoforte.

pp mit erhobener Dämpfung.

O du Ent - riss' - ne mir und mei - nem

Kus - sel sei mir ge - grüsst, sei mir ge - küsst, sei mir ge -

küsst! Er - reich - bar nur meinem Schn - sucht's - gru - sse,

The image shows a page of a musical score for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (Singstimme) and a piano accompaniment (Pianoforte). The tempo is marked 'Langsam.' (Ad libitum). The piano part is marked 'pp mit erhobener Dämpfung.' (pianissimo with raised damper). The lyrics are in German. The first system shows the beginning of the piece. The second system contains the first line of lyrics: 'O du Ent - riss' - ne mir und mei - nem'. The third system contains the second line: 'Kus - sel sei mir ge - grüsst, sei mir ge - küsst, sei mir ge -'. The fourth system contains the third line: 'küsst! Er - reich - bar nur meinem Schn - sucht's - gru - sse,'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

Ex. 15.1: F. Schubert, *Sei mir gegrüsst*, Op.20 No.1, mm. 1-22.

Andantino

352

358 col pedale

p

pp

ppp

p

Ex. 15.2: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth. 159, D. 934
Andantino, mm. 352-361.

5 4 3 2 1

Figure 3: McCreless' linear analysis of *Sei mir gegrüsst*, mm. 1-8.⁷⁵

The second part of the theme resembles the fifth stanza (mm. 61-77) in its motivic profile but Schubert simplifies the dominant prolongation (mm. 61-65) into a two-measure cadential pattern (V-I) (Example 16.1-2). The refrain spans fourteen measures with the phrase structure laid out as 8+4+2. The overall structure of the theme appears as asymmetrical with irregular phrase lengths. However, the harmonic rhythm underneath is much simpler and more straightforward compared to the lied's irregular strophic layout.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 221.

59
 küsst! Wie du mir je im schön- sten Lenz der
 64
 Lie- be mit Gruss und Kuss ent- ge- gen kamst, mit mei- - ner
 69
 See- - le glü- - hendstem Er- gus- se sei mir ge- grüsst,
 A: V 6-4 C: V7 I vi III








Ex. 16.1: F. Schubert, *Sei mir gegrüsst*, Op. 20 No. 1, mm. 59-73.

369 Motive
 374 Sequence
 380 Cb: V
 Gb (b VII) Cb (b III) I iii6-4 V7 i (ii of A b M)
 A b: vi III V V

Ex. 16.2: F. Schubert, *Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano*, Op. posth.159, D.934 *Andantino*, mm. 369-385.

According to McCreless, the structural simplification in the Andantino's theme is a significant loss. However, a simple and straightforward profile is a necessity for a variation theme, for it can then be modified, elaborated and developed in the following variations. A theme that is structurally and aesthetically full blown would no longer suffice as a variation theme. In fact, such elaboration of a motivic idea could possibly be considered a movement or an independent piece, and that is not what Schubert intended here. In the Andantino movement, there is no longer the same manipulation of voicing and intricate text painting, but notwithstanding its obvious binary structure, the theme contains its own irregular phrase lengths, rhythmic tension and harmonic digression.

Without the poem's strophes to dictate a general framework, the formal structure of Andantino's theme is now presented in a more straightforward binary form. The piano's opening is not an introduction that prepares the singer's entrance but a complete statement with its own harmonic closure (I-V-vi-III-V-I). Then the statement is repeated when the violin reiterates the top melody. Hence, motivically, the first part of the binary theme corresponds to the first and second strophes of the song. However, now without the text and role-assignment, Schubert manipulates the rhythm instead to express the emotional turbulence of the Romantic protagonist. Over the entire span of *Sei mir gegrüsst*, the conceptual distance between the Romantic protagonist and his unattainable beloved is shown through metric misalignment between the singer and the piano's right hand melody (Example 17.1). Now in the Andantino movement, the right hand's melody begins on the downbeat, as opposed to offbeats in the song, but Schubert preserves rhythmic tension by aligning the straightforward melody against now syncopated left hand (Example 17.2). The syncopation pattern is maintained until it begins to change in measure 357 when the right hand's melody corresponds to the singer's subjunctive phrase "*sei mir*

gegrüsst". Then for the remaining four measures, the syncopation ceases and there is rhythmic congruity between the hands as the left hand sings a countermelody in even eighth notes. The rhythmic profile of the right hand melody bears some changes as well. In the song, the initial three notes are played and sung evenly (either  or ) whereas in the Andantino, it is altered to (). This altered model becomes an archetype for other rhythmic variations: ( and ) and ). These altered patterns effect a rhythmic anticipation and a constant momentum towards the downbeat of the following measure. In larger context, when the altered rhythm in the right hand melody is laid on top of the syncopated pattern of the left hand () , there is a momentary unification in rhythm between the hands. As the result, there is a consistent syncopation between the hands in the first five measures of the theme (mm. 352-356) until it is reconciled in the following measures (mm. 358-360). Such a change in rhythmic pattern finds another purpose when we observe the melodic alteration. The Romantic sentiment of restlessness discomfort is expressed through 1) offbeat placement of the melody played by the right hand of the piano in the introduction and 2) augmented second interval in the singer's entrance (B \flat to C \sharp). When refashioning a variation theme for the Andantino, Schubert's choices are conventional in that he uses the top melodic line from the piano's introduction instead of the inner voice given to the singer and then applies the rhythmic stability of the singer's line. However, by inserting a chromatic filler (D \flat) into the melodic contour (C-D \flat -D \natural -E \flat) now in the altered rhythm, Schubert delays the arrival on the first note of the descending *Urlinie* (E \flat , $\hat{5}$) to the second beat of the second measure as opposed to off the downbeat in the second measure in the lied. Subsequently, the non-chord tones (passing tones) land on the downbeat of the measure.

This creates a momentary clash of pitches between the hands: D \sharp (forming a tritone) together with B \sharp in the inner voice (forming an augmented second/ninth) against the A \flat octaves at the bottom. By placing two non-chord tones on the downbeat and deliberately adding an accent on the dissonances, Schubert sought to convey a feeling of uneasiness and provide a strong tonal momentum.

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's 'Sei mir gegrüsst', Op. 20 No. 1, measures 1-17. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line (Singstimme) and piano accompaniment (Pianoforte). The vocal line is marked 'Langsam. Uralinie' and 'Metrically shifted'. The piano part is marked 'pp mit erhobener Dämpfung'. The second system shows the vocal line with lyrics 'O du Ent-riss'-ne mir und mei-nem' and piano accompaniment. The piano part has an annotation 'Augmented second B \flat C \sharp '. The third system shows the vocal line with lyrics 'Kus-se! sei mir ge-grüsst, sei mir ge-küsst, sei mir ge-' and piano accompaniment. The piano part has an annotation 'Incongruous with the singer' and 'pp'. The number '1921.' is in the top right corner.

Ex. 17.1: F. Schubert, *Sei mir gegrüsst*, Op. 20 No. 1, mm. 1-17.

Andantino

352 Initial ascent Urlinie 5 4 -Change of rhythmic pattern
 -A preparation for rhythmic unity

358 *col pedale* -Dissonant passing tones emphasized

A ♭: I C B ♭ A ♭ V vi III (V of vi)

Ex. 17.2: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth.159, D.934 Andantino, mm. 352-363.

It is no coincidence that measure 358, where this rhythmic congruity occurs, is also an important focal point in the opening harmonic progression: A♭M: I-V-vi-III (V/vi)-V-I (Example 17.2) The progression entails a sequential pair of descending fourths in the bass notes: I(A♭) down to V(E♭), and vi(F) down to III(C), then V(E♭) down to I(A♭). This sequence creates an illusion of a conventional pattern. McCreless also points out the fact that the pattern appears to be circular although literally, it is not so.⁷⁶ The mode mixture chord III (C, E♯, G) that precedes V (E♭, G, B♭) is in fact a secondary dominant (V/vi) both in its harmonic function and also in the way it is heard in the flow of the progression. Therefore, if the chord were to resolve normally, the progression would be palindromic (I-V-vi-V/vi-vi-V-I).⁷⁷ But Schubert breaks the conventional rule of harmonic progression by “making the poignant move directly to V and thus forcing the #5̂ (E♯) to behave as ♭6̂”.⁷⁸ McCreless also mentions another possibility of a longer

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

harmonic digression by continuing the pattern of descending fourths, each a third lower: **I-V, vi-III, IV-I, ii...IV-I.**⁷⁹ Therefore, possibilities of various digressions are embedded in the harmonic progression of the first six measures of the theme (I-V-vi-III). Schubert reinforces the feeling of instability through the tension of rhythmic incongruity aforementioned and accented dissonances, reconciled in measure 358, at which point the underlying harmony also returns to the dominant (V). This inappropriately prepared resolution to V indicates, in a literal sense, a break of a conventional progression, but also, aesthetically, it represents an abrupt return back to the beginning of the protagonist's imagined journey (back to reality) before completely grasping his goal (successfully reaching his destination).

The first part of the theme is therefore deceptively straightforward. Schubert reconstructs the song's melody into a more conventional structure while manipulating its rhythmic profile in the context of the given harmonic progression in order to project the song's Romantic subtext, only now in a more subtle way without the narrated poem. With his instrumental rendition of *Sei mir gegrüsst*, Schubert strikes a balance between structural order and expressive freedom that is in fact desirable and thus appropriate, for a variation theme.

Schubert maintains this balance throughout the second part of the theme. The protagonist's emotional and spiritual wandering, suggested through the gradual harmonic digression over the span of five strophes, is now condensed into a sequential pattern over an eight even measures (mm.372-379; refer to Example 16.2, page 74). The digression is regulated by V-I pattern: A \flat major: V-I, \flat VII- \flat III (V-I in C \flat M), vii^{o7}-iii⁶₄ (digression), VI⁷-ii (V-I in B \flat minor). Furthermore, the harmonic rhythm is conventional because it shows a typical 2+2 antecedent followed by 2+2 consequent phrase structure. Without the strophic text to govern the

⁷⁹ Ibid.

emotional development and to motivate the expansion of phrases, the progressive drama narrated throughout the entire song is now compressed into eight measures of regulated harmonic digression. Although the harmonic rhythm is even and predictable, what these measures represent structurally is a transition moving towards harmonic stability. Schubert reinforces this structural function with a rhythmic motive from the first part of the theme. Let us examine the rhythmic profile of the piano's left hand from measure 357 (♩ ♩ ♩ ♩) (Example 17.2). This is a break point in the syncopation pattern thus far observed (♩ ♩ ♩ ♩). The change is subtle, but in a larger context measure 357 functions as a transition-like conduit that prepares the rhythmic integration of the following measures. Throughout the first part of the theme, the only other time this pattern occurs is in measure 367, the corresponding pattern-breaking moment during the theme's reiteration by the violin. Schubert employs this transition motive in the initial eight measures of the second part to yield a rather subtle motivic coherence within the structure of the theme.

In *Sei mir gegrüsst*, each strophe grows in length and the corresponding harmonic digression intensifies. However, the most compelling manifestation of Romantic drama is the gradual rise of the register of the singer who at the end takes over the top melodic voice (a brief moment of unification with his beloved). Without the multiple attempts of the singer's *Übergreifung* (reaching over) in each strophe, the melodic line in the digression passage (mm. 372-379) in the theme displays a long stepwise ascent forming a contrary motion against the bass (Example 16.2, page 74). Extra momentum is added to this motion of the outer voices when the right hand joins the left hand's rhythmic motive in measures 374 and 378, where the inner voice of the left hand also creates a contrary motion against the top line. Thus the application of the

transition motive (♩ ♪ ♪♪) not only renders motivic coherence but also contributes to the harmonic drive between the chords.

The Andantino's theme is certainly not a literal rendition of *Sei mir gegrüsst*, but rhetorically it does not need to be. Compared to the song, framework of the variation theme imposes structural, and perhaps expressive, restrictions. Its structural purpose is different from the lied and yet Schubert refashions and translates various text-painting maneuvers into ways more fitting for two instruments, and manages to preserve some of the essential expression communicated in the song.

The Variations

Schubert composed just three variations out of the Andantino's theme. This is considerably less compared to his other song-based instrumental variations: five variations for both the A major Quintet, D.667, "Trout", and the D minor String Quartet, D.810, "Death and the Maiden", and seven variations in Introduction and Variations for Flute and Piano, D.802, "Trockne Blumen". When we examine the entire framework of the Fantasy, such a compact design appears structurally sufficient. The Andantino's theme and variations is one of four sections that are played continuously without a break. It functions as a part of a larger flow of expression. In addition to the blurred boundaries, the Andantino's motivic idea is reused as transitional material between sections, mm. 458-479 and mm.639-664. Unlike the variation themes in D.667 and D.810, the melodic material of *Sei mir gegrüsst* is integrated, beyond the boundary of the Andantino, into a larger framework. Such integral usage negates the Andantino's identity as an independent movement with a self-contained theme. Thus, as an expressive part of the Fantasy's overall layout, the length of Andantino's theme and variations is structurally proportionate.

Table 3: Formal Structure of the Violin Fantasy, D.934

I	II	III	Transition	[Reprise of Introduction]	IV	[Reprise of the theme] (Transition)	CODA
1-36	37-351	352-457	458-479	480-492	493-638	639-664	665-700
Andante Molto	Allegretto	Andantino Theme+Vars.	Based on the theme	[Andante Molto]	Allegro	[Allegretto]	Presto
A	A	A Dev. A Dev. (aabab)			A B Dev. A B Dev. A (aabb)		
C	a—C A~a-C C~A♭		A♭~V of C	C	C C a~C A~~a—C	A♭~V of C	C

What is unique about Andantino’s variations in comparison to other song-based variations written by Schubert, is that there is a sense of progressive intensification with each one. Schubert refrains from exploring mode mixture and meter adjustment in that all three variations remain in the key of the theme (A♭ Major) and in the original meter (3/4). The obvious manifestation of progressiveness is the gradual increase in rhythmic activity (Example 18). The first variation begins with sixteenth notes in the violin part which accelerates into sextuplets (mm. 392, 394). In the second variation, the right hand of the piano takes over the sextuplets which then turn into thirty-second notes (mm. 416-418). In the last variation, the thirty-second notes become a perpetual motion played by the violin.

Var. 1 ³⁸⁶ *rit.* *pp*

390 *p*

394 *f*

398 *cresc.* *f* *fz* *fz* *fz*

402 *ff* *p* *p*

Ex. 18: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth. 159, D. 934
Andantino Variations, mm. 386-457.

407

pp

pp

1. 2.

Var. 2 410

pizz.

p

413

416

418

arco

Ex. 18, continued.

420

p *decresc.* *pp*

423

cresc.

cre - scen - do

425

427

f

429

decresc. *p*

Ex. 18, continued.

431

433 arco *pp* Var. 3

436 *pp*

439 *pp*

441 *pp*

Ex. 18, continued.

444 *p* *decresc.* *pp*

447 *cresc.* *cresc.*

450 *f>* *decresc.* *p*

453 *pp* *pp*

455

The musical score consists of six systems of piano and grand staves. The key signature is one flat (F major), and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes various dynamics such as *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), *f* (forte), *f>* (forte accent), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *decresc.* (decrescendo). Articulations like trills (*tr*) and slurs are used throughout. Measure numbers 444, 447, 450, 453, and 455 are clearly marked at the beginning of their respective systems.

Ex. 18, continued.

The less obvious, but the most intriguing manifestation of this progressive intensification is the way Schubert treats the instruments throughout the variations. Unlike as in the *Trockne Blumen* variations for Flute and Piano, both instruments constantly play a prominent role throughout the entire variations. In a way, each variation features not only one but multiple versions of variations laid on top of each other. Just as the theme is embedded in all the arpeggiations of the violin in the first variation, the piano part, despite its rhythmic monotony, also contains the melodic line of the theme as well as the inner voices and the bass. In other words, there is never a moment where either instrument plays a role that is strictly accompanimental. In the second variation, the piano breaks out of the rhythmic monotony. In fact, each hand has its own motivic profile. The left hand appears to be an Alberti bass but it is reminiscent of what the violin played before in that it contains the melody as well as the inner voice. Compared to this, the pizzicato of the violin plays a more subservient voice in the texture, but it features a separate contour of countermelody. Furthermore, the violin soon joins the piano with its own rhythmic acceleration outlining a countermelody. In the last variation, the violin takes over the thirty-second notes from the piano. If two hands of the piano displayed two different voices in the second variation, now the violin's busy figurations outline a moving melody against pedal tones simultaneously. In the first two measures of the variation, Schubert constructs an example of *Übergreifung* (reaching over) of an inner voice (refer to the detail in Example 19.2 in page 94). In measure 434, the melodic pitches, C-C-D \flat -E \flat , are discreetly planted in the violin's figurations. In the next measure, the last note of the melody (E \flat) becomes a pedal note while the E \flat of a lower octave begins to move upward, rising above the register of the melody. The rest of the figurations are constructed in a similar manner: (melody + pedal tone). The piano returns to synchronized rhythm, but by no means is it an accompaniment to the

perpetual motion of the violin. Not only are the melody, the bass and the inner voice contained, but its rhythmic/motivic profile is independent and individual enough to be considered as a separate version of a variation. If the first variation features two central voices between the two instruments, the second and third variations feature three distinctive lines: the piano plays two voices in the second variations and then the violin plays two in the third.

The Andantino variations exhibit a rare case of an instrumental duet where the texture rarely consists of a primary line of melody with an accompaniment. Here, such roles are neither fixed nor apparent. There are incidents of motivic and rhythmic unification in cadential moments (mm. 394, 408, 419, 433). However, the ensemble between the instruments is not built upon the usual give-and-take dialogue through shared motives and rhythms. In fact, both instrument present motivic and rhythmic profiles in each variation that are distinctive enough to suffice as an independent take on the theme. The variations communicate a unique sense of a duet in that two voices share a conceptual goal: progressive intensification, by means of rhythmic acceleration and textural depth. In *Sei mir gegrüsst*, the gradual rise of the singer's register and corresponding harmonic digression portrayed the progressive drama of the poem's expanding strophes. Without a text in the Andantino's variations, formal framework and harmonic structure are modified to be shorter and fixed. However, Schubert repaints the emotional development of the poem through an acceleration of rhythm and an increase in the number of motivic variations and voices rendered by both the piano in the second variation and by the violin in the third variation.

Virtuosity in the Variations

I have argued that the sentiment of *Sei mir gegrüsst* manifests differently in the Andantino's theme and variations. The variations are bounded by a fixed harmonic progression within a binary framework. But amidst such structural confinement Schubert preserves the sense of development in time, literally narrated in the song. As the music progresses from one variation to the next, there is a continuous accumulation of tension achieved through increased rhythmic activity and complex figuration. Accordingly, certain passages require ample amount of dexterity from its players (i.e. the piano in the second variation and the violin in the third variation). However, we must consider the unusual nature of the instrumental duet in these particular variations and understand its goal of communication: translating the song's progressive drama into a language more idiosyncratic for an instrumental duet and for the character of variation structure. The busy figurations of the variations that are often considered as virtuosic serve a structural and a conceptual purpose. To better assess the virtuosic nature of instrumental writing in the variations, we need not focus on the physical difficulty that arises from playing, but instead dwell on what they represent in a bigger scheme of expression and what they intend to communicate.

The Fantasy's technical passagework has convinced many to categorize the work as a virtuoso piece. However, without an understanding of their purpose, the Fantasy is too easily viewed as a work unidiomatic for the violin with unrewarding and superfluous fingerwork. Many violinists of the later generation including Boris Schwarz, made remarks in regards to certain passages as virtually unplayable.⁸⁰ Now I will discuss a case in which a violinist disregarded any conceptual or structural purpose of the technical challenges in the variations, and primarily

⁸⁰ Boris Schwarz, "Die Violinbehandlung bei Schubert," in *Zur Aufführungspraxis der Werke Franz Schuberts*, ed. Vera Schwarz (Munich, 1981), 90.

concerned with instrumental idiom, tried find a feasible solution by transposing the variations from A \flat major to A major.⁸¹

The Fantasy's Variations: Idiomatic Rendition by the Violinist August Wilhelmj

August Wilhelmj (1845-1908) was a German virtuoso of the nineteenth century. Wilhelmj's attempt to cope with technical challenges presented by the Fantasy has led him to write his own edition of the Fantasy with considerable modifications in regards to pitches, figurations, and the allocation of motives between the violin and the piano. Wilhelmj sought to create a version that is more idiomatic by transposing the entire theme and variations up a half step: from A \flat major to A major. From a violinist's view Wilhelmj's intention is apparent in that transposition yields more open E-string playing thus relieving the performer from the burden of constant string crossing.⁸² The variations I and III are case in point.

While Wilhelmj's solution eliminates considerable amount of string crossings, this is the only advantage. In fact, playing the variations in A major generates issues not present in the original. The theme of the *Sei mir gegrüsst* is embedded in perpetual figuration. In the first variation, the challenge is to bring forth the melodic pitches as a flowing line in the midst of constant string crossing and busy arpeggiations. Now in A major, open A and open E strings

⁸¹ Schubert, *Werke für Klavier und ein Instrument*, Schubert: Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke, ser. VI, vol. 8, foreword, ix.

⁸² Virtuoso violinists of the Romantic era were acutely conscious of favorable keys for their instrument. Paganini wrote the orchestra parts to his first violin concerto in the key of E \flat major for a more subdued color (less open string playing) to accompany the solo part written in D major to be tuned a semitone higher for performance. This scordatura practice, nowadays obsolete, allowed Paganini to perform in the key of E \flat while achieving the brilliance of the instrument rendered by the key of D major (i.e. more open strings, generating overtones with less effort, and fingerings that are more idiomatic). Pablo de Sarasate, a virtuoso violinist exact contemporary of Wilhelmj's, transcribed Chopin's Nocturne in D \flat major into violin and piano accompaniment version in D major for the same reasons.

become available for use, eliminating the consecutive string crossings for the first measure and half (Example 19.1). For the following measures, Wilhelmj's fingerings suggest a shift from consecutive string crossings back to a simplified bow maneuver. Even in this four-measure antecedent phrase there is inconsistency not only in bow maneuver but more importantly, in color. Open strings on a violin yield greater resonance and special timbre. But at the same time, warmth in tone is compromised. Out of all the open strings on a violin, the open E string, although variable depending on the instrument and the string type, will more often than not yield a bright and piercing timbre. When the desired effect and goal is to delineate the melodic pitches (C#-D_b-D#-E), all struck on the E string, playing an open E around the melodic pitches will blend the color and make it significantly harder to accentuate the line of the melody.

Furthermore, although the burden of constant string crossing is somewhat lifted by taking advantage of the open strings, it forces extra shifting for the left hand that is both unnecessary and counterintuitive. Plus, the first two measures suggest a tonic prolongation with a chromatic ascent of the melodic line from $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{5}$. E, the fifth of the A major triad, is the only non-moving note and harmonically the least important one in this context. Considering how often it is played in these two measures, using the bright open string for E is theoretically and aesthetically undesirable. Therefore, there is no convincing reason, both musically and technically, to use an opening string simply for the sake of convenience for the bow arm. The utility of employing the open E string, achieved through transposing the movement up to A major, is in fact a musical and technical disadvantage in this case.

Var. I.

Melodic pitches to be brought out

To be played with 2 on the A string

Although 2 on the A string is possible, the preceding open A suggests an open E to be used here.

p sempre staccato

(1 0 4 0 2 0 4 3 1)
The implied fingerings yield extra shifting and blend of color.

(2 2 2)

0 3 0): Change of pattern in string crossing as well as color.

Ex. 19.1: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth. 159 – D.934 transcribed by August Wilhelmj, Andantino, First Variation, mm. 386-388.

The issue that arises from taking advantage of open strings remains musically counterintuitive in the third variation for the reasons already stated. Here, the linear motion of the theme is further obscured by the faster rhythmic motion (from sixteenth to thirty-second notes) (Example 19.2). From a point of execution, transposing to A major is most beneficial in measures two and four (and wherever the string crossing involves an open E string throughout the rest of the variation). Unlike in the first two measures of the first variation, in the second measure of the third variation, E is in fact a melodic pitch ($\hat{5}$) that functions as a quasi-pedal tone for the arpeggiating voice that embellishes the melody. Because the rate at which notes pass by is now considerably quicker, it is all the more important to delineate the voices involved by using different strings as much as possible. In the fourth measure, E is no longer a part of the melodic line (B-B-C#-D) but once again functions as a pedal tone which is of secondary importance against the moving voice. However, Wilhelmj's fingerings of utilizing the open E string do not help delineating this moving voice.

Var. III.

pp spiccato

Melodic pitches

C# C# D E

E becomes a pedal

all on the E string

Lower voice becomes active and reaches over the melody's register: Übergreifung

Suggested use of the open E string for the pedal tone against the moving voice on the A string.

Ex. 19.2: F. Schubert, Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, Op. posth. 159, D. 934 transcribed by August Wilhelmj, Andantino, Third Variation, mm. 434-437.

The technical elements in the Fantasy have been criticized for the lack of musical content. The performer faces a greater challenge in the third variation where the rhythmic activity heightens for both hands. The perpetual drive of thirty-second notes easily lends it an etude-like quality. The performer is given the task of producing variety of timbres for different voices as much as the instrument allows, and constructing a sensible phrasing accordingly. Utilization of open E strings in the third variation, once again, relieves the player of abundant string crossings, but the result is a monotonous color that only contributes to an already etude-like nature of the variation.

Transposing the theme and variations to A major has an acoustic advantage, a key more favorable to the instrument in regards to resonance and overtones yielding more brilliance and greater sound projection, and a technical advantage, utilization of open strings eliminating busy string crossings in certain measures. However, the performer is left with fingerings that are counterintuitive (e.g. beginning of the first var.) and an undesirable blend of color where delineation of voices is crucial. Semitone transposition generates more issues for the performer because it fails to take into account the challenge pertaining to musical expression of each

variation. Furthermore, writing the theme and variations in A major creates entirely new dimensions of problems in the work's overall harmonic layout. Hence, Wilhelmj's solution has little benefit in exchange for much compromise in a work criticized for its empty virtuosity and sometimes, for its structural ambiguity.

Re-defining Virtuosity

I hope to have proposed a different approach to understanding the virtuoso elements in Schubert's violin music by juxtaposing some of Paganini's music and also by incorporating other scholars' criticisms on the Violin Fantasy. A careful analysis dissects a piece's thematic, harmonic, and organizational structure, and provides insights into composer's style and even intentions. However, virtuosity is a topic that cannot be organically explained in terms of traditional analysis alone. Virtuosity does not have a theoretical vocabulary. The style of Paganini's music is deeply embedded in virtuoso elements. Paganini himself was a virtuoso performer, so identifying the meaning and function of those elements is relatively straightforward. Schubert was never a virtuoso performer nor is he known for writing virtuoso music. As McCreless claimed, virtuosity was not Schubert's voice. So can we even label the Violin Fantasy as "virtuoso" music? If virtuoso music must render flashy effects and bravura, then the Violin Fantasy is not one. But, ever since its unsuccessful premiere in 1828 in Vienna, a handful of criticism and analyses has classified the Fantasy as a virtuoso piece and moreover, a poorly conceived one. In the midst of all the contextualization and comparative analyses conducted in this paper, we have yet to clarify how one comes to define virtuosity. The analyses and criticism of the Violin Fantasy presented thus far by various scholars are built upon a hazy premise that technical difficulty equals virtuosity. Even if this equation is valid, technical

difficulty is an assessment that can be precisely brought forth only by an individual who physically realizes the written notes on the music, the performer. Therefore, besides discussing whether or not the virtuoso elements in the Violin Fantasy serve a valid purpose, we must delve into other more important questions: is it virtuoso music to begin with? Does the fact that Fantasy presents technical difficulties for the player make it virtuoso music? and finally, how do we define technical difficulty? To clarify these issues, I now propose a performer's perspective upon the topic of technical difficulty and then investigate the meaning of it in Schubert's music.

CHAPTER FOUR

A PERFORMER'S PERSPECTIVE

Technique and Technical Difficulty

Maurice Brown, a modern-day exponent of Schubert scholarship, shares his view in regards to the writing of the Fantasy that despite hints of promise at the beginning of each section, the music “soon becomes embroidered with superfluous virtuosity”.⁸³ Brown and McCreless’ scholastic evaluation and criticisms of the Fantasy’s virtuosity are constructed upon the proposed claim that it is technically too difficult. Yet their assessments on the topic of technical difficulty in Schubert’s Fantasy are misleading and outdated for the following reasons.

First, the concept of technique and any difficulty generated by it within a piece of music cannot be assessed in the same manner by its performer, who realizes physically the virtuoso writing, and by the non-performer, scholars and theorists who incorporate and apply their expertise in analysis to assess the degree of technical challenge. The mechanics of violin technique entail various types of physical maneuver involving muscle manipulation: complex fingerings, stretches, and quick leaps for the left hand as well as various bow strokes, divisions and controls, and then combinations of such elements. However, the concept of technique cannot be explained by precision and coordination of physics alone. Instrument playing requires highly sophisticated sensory and motor exercises that are conducted by a person who performs the necessary muscle manipulation governed by his thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, when these virtuoso pieces are performed by a person with a wide palette of emotion, sentiment and nuance are infused into physical precision. In other words, technique is an inseparable component of

⁸³ Brown, 270.

artistic expression of a musical work that can only be realized by an individual who participates in the actual process, the performer. Thus, physical realization of written music, especially of the ones written by an individual such as Schubert who often performed his own chamber music, becomes imperative in understanding the composer's perspective by participating in the manifestation of the expression. Paganini's music holds the same truth. When discussing the chamber music of Schubert or the virtuoso violin music of Paganini, the aesthetic value of a work cannot be broken down just into the language of theoretical analysis nor can the manifestation of expressive nuance and phrasing therein be captured only with musicological facts and insights, no matter how thorough and comprehensive they might be. It is a performer's prerogative to be able to approach a piece of music beyond printed notes and documented facts by possessing the tools to experience first-handedly the perspective of a composer-as-a-performer. Physical realization of such music potentially fosters a new realm of interpretation and insights otherwise unattainable.

Second, the concept of "technical difficulty" is perceived quite differently from one performer to another because individual strengths and weaknesses will vary depending on one's physical as well as mental training in addition to any particular disciplinary routines. When it comes to playing the violin, certain physical attributes alone can influence one's perception of technical difficulty. For instance, an individual with larger hands and longer fingers is less likely to be burdened by complex chords that require strenuous stretches. Also, having thick fingers is advantageous when playing the fifth interval that requires covering two strings with one finger yet at the same time, it is more challenging to execute quick scales of whole and half steps in very high positions, due to such close proximity of pitches on higher part of the fingerboard, requiring a person with thick fingers to either wedge them together as much as possible or to

simply make minute in-position shifts. When we consider the habitual tendencies as well as mental strengths and weaknesses of each individual, there are a myriad of factors that govern the perception of executional difficulty in playing the violin. Thus, the effort to objectively define technical difficulty in violin music is counter-productive and unintuitive.

Third, the general perception of “technical difficulty” in violin playing has also changed significantly over time. The average level of technical prowess among violinists has risen drastically as well as steadily ever since 1828. In the early nineteenth century, there was scarcely a violinist with dexterity to master the technical challenges proposed by the Violin Fantasy or any of Paganini’s concertos and variations.⁸⁴ Then, the post-Paganini era witnessed the flourishing of romantic virtuoso violinists. The early nineteenth-century virtuoso music of Schubert and Paganini is still considered challenging in our time. However, with the development of systematic pedagogy and organized training at institutions with broader disciplinary methods of the modern day, that music has become much more accessible to handful of contemporary virtuosos.

Technical difficulty in violin music cannot be purely objective in its concept; instead, it varies among players who come to encounter it. Even if technical challenges in violin music of 1828 could have been objectively assessed and then categorized into different levels, the issue of difficulty as perceived now in the twenty-first century, cannot be a decisive and compelling reason in itself to discredit the entire musical value of the Violin Fantasy.

Technical difficulty is subjective in nature therefore it cannot be generalized and certainly cannot be addressed interchangeably with the term virtuosity. At times, virtuoso writing will

⁸⁴ Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst is generally considered as the only virtuoso contemporary of Paganini who not only sought to emulate the feats of the Italian but surpassed his rival in some regards, as considered by critics and scholars.

present technical challenge, but not always. Also, just because a work presents technical challenges, does not mean the music should be called a “virtuoso” piece. Let us again contrast the writing in the violin music of Paganini with that of Schubert’s Violin Fantasy. The style and character are certainly different. The general conception of “difficulty” also varies significantly in nature. Nonetheless, from a performer’s perspective, they both feature technical challenges. Suppose a concert violinist with a consummate mastery of the instrument delivers a musically convincing and technically flawless performance of a theme and variations by Paganini alongside Schubert’s Violin Fantasy. The performer’s perception of the technical challenge presented by both pieces might not differ significantly, but from a listener’s perspective, the “virtuoso” effects rendered are not nearly the same. Ever since a concept of virtuosity was epitomized by Paganini and reinforced through a pool of nineteenth century violin literature, the term implied display of effects that are more explicit than implicit. If we are to uphold the viewpoints of Brown and McCreless and consider the Violin Fantasy as a virtuoso piece, then we endorse the notion that its virtuosity communicates an entirely different concept and purpose from the virtuosity understood in 1828 in Vienna. The alternative approach would be to understand the Violin Fantasy as a work that does not exhibit virtuosity *per se* with deliberate and explicit effects, but a work exhibiting subtle structural coherence with challenging technical passages that are unflattering in their effects yet pivotal once their contextual function and expressive purpose are understood, and certainly rewarding when a performance can be carried out with such understanding.

A Performer's Prerogative and Responsibility

When a piece of music is analyzed as a composition written on paper, various theoretical components can be assessed. Furthermore, such analysis provides not just critical insights into the composer's musical personality but often political, social and economic context surrounding the work. However, the essence of a piece of music goes far beyond the realm of its compositional elements and other extra-musical contexts, especially in the music written by composer-performers such as Paganini and Schubert. The shift in musical trend and the fetish of virtuosity acquired through Biedermeier sentiment were certainly important factors behind the general public's infatuation in the early nineteenth century. But beside compositional coherence and executional brilliance, at the core of the Paganinian sensation was the performer's ability to communicate his music beyond the written notes and physical execution. It was Paganini's unique approach and personal interpretation of his music that made his virtuosity one of a kind. It was then that his virtuosity was transformed into an art form and ultimately became an indispensable part of musical expression. Therefore, a performer's responsibility stretches beyond accurate observation and execution of written components in music. Compared to the flamboyant and explicit nature of virtuosity in Paganini's music, the writing in Schubert's Violin Fantasy requires more contextual interpretation from its performer.

The criticisms and the programming history behind the Fantasy have proven that the work's laborious yet aurally unimpressive technical passages have been viewed through a confined perspective. The fact that a palpable shift in musical trend was evident and that Schubert had written the work for virtuoso performers, Bocklet and Slavik, have encouraged scholars and musicologists to address the work only by the nineteenth century standard of virtuosity. But as my analysis suggests, the virtuoso elements in the Fantasy should not be

approached so for various reasons. Schubert's musical output, especially during his last few years, was impressively consistent in its craftsmanship and maturity. Schubert's struggle at the time for financial stability as well as his hope for acknowledgement as a serious composer conveniently support a view that the Fantasy was the composer's poor attempt at the new trend and was composed only for a reason of appealing to a decadent taste of the general public. But when we examine the works written around Schubert's final years, there is hardly a piece conceived for such practical purpose where the composer completely abandons his character and integrity. Schubert's uncompromising character and integrity as a composer is well represented by the incident during his audition for the conductor position at the Imperial Opera in 1826.⁸⁵ A review from *Theatrezeitung* of Vienna expressed an impression of the Fantasy's premiere as the following: "[The premiere] showed up Slavik's shortcomings and thought it would only be appreciated by an audience of 'true connoisseurs'".⁸⁶ Because the same performers premiered the Rondo Brillante in B with a considerable success just a year before, perhaps with the Violin Fantasy Schubert felt even freer from any concern about the physical realization of his writing and focused on sheer expression by composing a piece with many subtleties only truly insightful connoisseurs could appreciate.

⁸⁵ Schubert struggled to make a name in the field of theater in the early 1820's. Without the system of aristocratic patronage and without the skill and persona of a concert virtuoso, Schubert sought ways to earn a steady income by auditioning for these posts. During a rehearsal, when a soprano insisted on making a minor change to some high notes in an aria, Schubert refused at once. When other members of the orchestra as well as the director suggested modifying a couple of pitches, Schubert stormed out, virtually terminating any further opportunities for himself in the field.

⁸⁶ An anonymous reviewer of *Theaterzeitung* (April 4, 1828), quoted in Renée de Saussine, *Paganini* trans. Marjorie Laurie (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1954), 94.

CONCLUSION

Schubert's Vienna was a world of music in which there was a clear division between that of private and that of public; songs, sonatas and chamber music were intended for the enjoyment of the players in private settings (in which Schubert himself actively participated as a performer) and operas and symphonies were intended for a larger public in concert halls.⁸⁷ Although Schubert left us with considerable amount of music of both kinds, he certainly excelled in writing music intended for a more private setting: *Lieder* and *Kammermusik*, the kind in which essence of the music is communicated as an ensemble between its participants.⁸⁸ David Schroeder emphasizes the fact that Schubert's role as an active participant in performing his own chamber music undeniably influenced the way all of his music was conceived and expressed.

Since [Schubert] wrote the vast majority of his works for these intimate performing settings, both solo and ensemble, he places himself in his own audience, experiencing the works in much the same way as the other participants. He wished more than anything to share his works with others able to understand them, and that understanding in large measure arises from an ability to perform them, as Schubert himself performs them, finding something that cannot arise from a listening experience.⁸⁹

Schubert certainly did not possess such consummate mastery of execution in any particular instrument as did Paganini in violin. But his playing on the piano, especially when he performed his own compositions, exhibited rich expressivity and insightful phrasing. Louis Schlösser, one

⁸⁷ Schroeder, 62.

⁸⁸ Some of his music for a larger public setting assumes a smaller chamber ensemble in its core conception. Throughout his symphonies, Schubert's orchestration only became truly symphonic in concept with his eighth "Unfinished" (1822), notwithstanding the fact that only two movements were completed. The preceding six (excluding the seventh symphony drafted in 1821 for which only a part of the opening movement was fully orchestrated by the composer) are more of an orchestral expansion on string quartet writing.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

of the connoisseurs fortunate to be present at one of Schubert's matinee concerts described Schubert's performance style.

Much as I liked the pieces I should not care to say for certain whether they were published exactly as he played them on this occasion from the sketch, improvising, as it were, rather than actually playing from the music. How spontaneous it sounded! How his eyes shone. I listened to the sounds with indescribable excitement—and yet, from the standpoint of virtuoso performance, this piano playing could not in any way compete with the world-famous Viennese master pianists. With Schubert, the expression of the emotions of the world within him obviously far outweighed his technical development. But who could think of this when, carried away by some bold flight of imagination, oblivious of everything round him, he recited the mighty C minor Fantasia[sic] [the “Wanderer”] or the A minor Sonata! It is not without reason that I choose this word; for the long familiar pieces sounded to me like dramatic recitation, like the outpourings of a soul which creates its musical forms from the depths of its being and clothes them in the garment of immaculate grace.⁹⁰

Schubert did not perform all the chamber music he ever wrote. In fact, he could not play some of his own piano works such as the last part of the *Wanderer* Fantasy for the piano, D.760. But what we can project here is his composer-as-performer approach to writing these types of music for more intimate settings and how a performer plays an integral part of expression in Schubert's music.

The fact that Schubert never identified himself as a virtuoso performer nor wrote his music to showcase virtuosity suggests a critical insight as to how technical passages in the Violin Fantasy, often categorized as virtuosic, are but a byproduct of conveying a more comprehensive idea. One of the reasons behind Schubert's underrated career during his time was his uncompromising musical integrity that governed his compositional process. As much as Schubert had hoped to win his Viennese public at the time of change in musical trend, it is hardly conceivable that he would incorporate any effect-rendering pretentious gesture in his artistic

⁹⁰ Otto Erich Deutsch, ed., *Schubert: Memoir by His Friends*, trans. Rosamond Ley and John Nowell (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), 330.

creativity. Schubert's character and personality as a composer as well as a performer of his own music are indications of how the issues of technique and technical challenge should be perceived as a means for musical expression and how performers of Schubert's Violin Fantasy should treat those issues accordingly, thus taking a pivotal step toward the composer's language in his art.

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